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Unknowable Audiovisual Results: *The Development of an Experimental Filmmaking Practice and Philosophy*

Portfolio presented by

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Declaration:
This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism and intellectual property.

ABSTRACT

This research poses three central questions about the practice of experimental filmmaking. The first interrogates the relationship between films' audio and visual components; the second deals with questions of meaning and meaninglessness in art film; the third explores the idea of employing chance operations and improvisational techniques so that the filmmaker is unable to predict the final form of their film. I explore these concepts through films and writing, presenting my research as a portfolio of eleven film projects accompanied by a written commentary investigating the philosophical ideas informing my methodological approaches, aesthetic tendencies, and creative outlook.

In my films, I explore these questions by experimenting with various methodologies that allow me to treat the sounds and images as equally important and independent entities, avoiding presupposing any meaning and ensuring I do not know what the final results will be in advance of the film being made. Examples of approaches I take that exemplify these ideas include making entirely separate, fully realised audio and video pieces that are only combined at the final stage of the filmmaking process, composing processes that set out how the film will be made without specifying the kinds of sounds and images that will be included, and incorporating improvisation and randomisation at all stages of the filmmaking process.

In my writing, I reflect on my filmmaking philosophy through in-depth discussions of these central concepts and the way they are intrinsically linked to the way I make my films. I present detailed accounts of my experimental filmmaking methodology in my commentary, both in general and in the specific approach taken for each film project. I also discuss my work as it relates to that of other experimental artists and engage with relevant ideas from the field of philosophy.

Keywords: Experimental film, audiovisual art, chance-based art, philosophy of filmmaking.

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- Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files: https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
- Password to access the folder: **bradstockphdfiles**

INTRODUCTION

I am an artist whose experimental film practice is founded on a philosophy of allowing sounds and images to co-exist as independent equals, rejecting the pre-supposition of meaning, and embracing unknowability. This PhD research explores the development of this practice and philosophy.

The creative output of this PhD contributes to the fields of experimental film and filmic arts more broadly, both in terms of the original films produced and my philosophy of film, which adds a new perspective to the ongoing discussions surrounding the audiovisual relationship in filmic arts. While my research is focused on the development of my personal filmmaking practice, I am simultaneously developing approaches to experimental filmmaking more generally. In this way, my research has the potential to serve as an inspiration for other artists and creative practitioners who want to explore this kind of experimental filmmaking for themselves.[1]

The ultimate goal of my research has been to develop an experimental filmmaking practice realised through a portfolio of original works.[2] The evolution of my theoretical and philosophical understanding of my practice occurred in parallel with the development of my practical filmmaking approaches. It was, therefore, not a case of first clearly defining my philosophical ideas in a purely theoretical sense and then exploring practical ways of implementing them while filmmaking, nor was it a case of simply reflecting on my practical filmmaking and retrospectively extracting a set of philosophical ideas from it; my filmmaking philosophy and the films I make are two sides of the same coin. However, to give the clearest overview of my practice so that the reader may better understand it, I must first present an investigation into my practice's philosophical and theoretical foundations before then presenting the films that this practice has led to.

Chapters 1 and 2 deal with the question of why I make films in the way that I do. In Chapter 1, I look outward at the broader field of filmmaking practices, critiquing some common aspects of filmic art and approaches taken by filmmakers that I feel are unnecessary and outlining the kind of filmmaking practice I wish to establish in response. In Chapter 2, I turn inwards and examine my philosophical ideas on the viewer-listener's experience of filmic art and show how these ideas lay the foundation of my approach to experimental filmmaking.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with how I make my films. In Chapter 3, I focus on my filmmaking methodology, giving insight into the core aspects of my filmmaking process. In Chapter 4, I discuss the aesthetic trends seen and heard in my films and consider the compositional techniques that give rise to them. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a collection of individual commentaries for each experimental film project in my portfolio.

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[1] It is also worth briefly noting that while my work is situated within the field of experimental film which has, perhaps unsurprisingly, served as a source of inspiration, my strongest influences have come from the fields of experimental music and philosophy, a point I will return to throughout this portfolio.

[2] I intentionally use the terms 'experimental films' and 'experimental filmmaking' to describe my art and practice, as opposed to terms such as 'audiovisual art' or 'audiovisual composition'. However, I do not believe that making any larger point of this semantic distinction would be of any real benefit to the reader at this stage; my reasoning for this will become more clear in the 2nd chapter focused on my philosophy, where I outline my conceptualisation of audiovisual experience and filmic art.

CHAPTER 1:
Critique of Established Filmmaking Practices

Preliminary Remarks:

This critique concerns all manner of filmic practices, from traditional narrative film to experimental audiovisual art. It outlines my thoughts on several trends in approaches to filmmaking (trends that I recognise as being unnecessary and inapplicable to my practice), with the goal being to uncover the foundations of my philosophy of experimental filmmaking that underlie my entire creative practice and all aspects of my research. It is based on my experience as both a filmic artist and a consumer of audiovisual media and, as such, it does not purport to be a purely objective treatise on how sounds and images are definitively used across filmic practices.

This critique is also not intended to be read as a polemic against any specific approach to filmmaking or type of audiovisual art. I am not suggesting that the approaches being critiqued are inherently inferior or misguided; I am only stating that accepting any of their premises is not essential and outlining my reasoning for rejecting them. On this note, it is important to make clear that my focus throughout the following discussions is on the role of the filmmaker in the creation of audiovisual art in terms of their approach and conceptualisations, as I am not presently focused on these issues from the standpoint of a viewer-listener experiencing said art.

The critique consists of three parts, which can each be read as standalone critiques in their own right while simultaneously working together to produce my overarching critique of established filmmaking practices. Regarding this combined reading, the tripartite structure can be interpreted in two ways. The first is that the three parts can be viewed as linearly leading into one another, the conclusion of each naturally leading to the following discussion. However, if one reflects on the content of the discussions and my responses, an argument can be made that this sense of one part leading into the next would be found in any order. In this way, the order I have chosen to present the following three discussions is not necessary, and it is perhaps more insightful to consider the parts as simultaneous discussions running in parallel (see Fig. 1).[3]

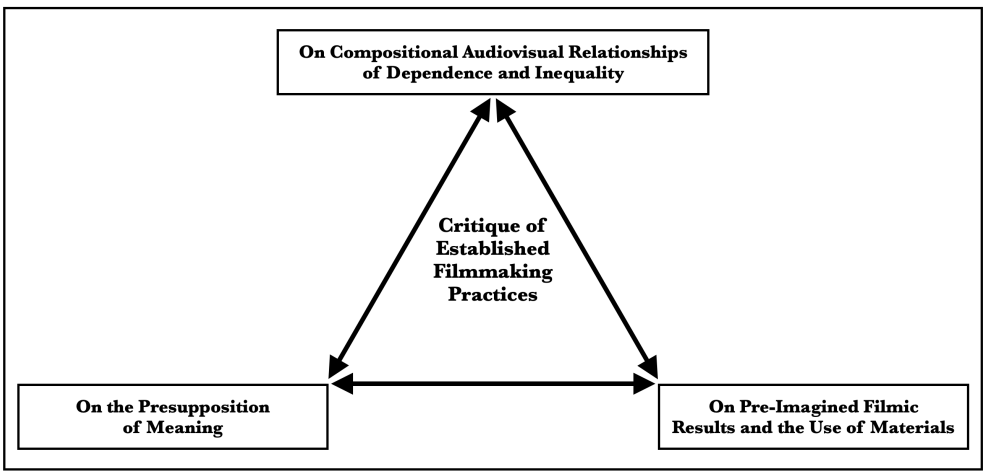


Fig. 1: Illustration of the critique's tripartite structure. The arrows reflect the way that each section can equally be seen as leading to or stemming from the others.

[3] I found some inspiration in the work of Immanuel Kant for how to represent the structure for this and subsequent chapters, specifically his illustrated tables found through his work *Critique of Pure Reason*; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Marcus Weigelt (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2007), 98, 105, 191, 318, 376.

On Compositional Audiovisual Relationships of Dependence and Inequality

Critique:

Across filmic practices, compositional audiovisual relationships tend towards dependence and/or inequality.

Discussion:

The following discussion concerns the 'compositional audiovisual relationship', a term I use to refer to how a piece of filmic art's sound and image tracks are related in terms of their creation and pairing. Due to the widespread use of the term 'audiovisual relationship' throughout the field of audiovisual arts to relate to a range of topics that are not the focus of my discussion, some clarifying remarks are needed before proceeding. By compositional audiovisual relationship, I am not referring to the ways in which sounds and images can be said to relate to one another in terms of their material contents; for this, I use the term 'perceived sound-image relationship'.[4] In this way, my discussion here is focused purely on the compositional aspects of filmic practices (i.e., the intentions and actions of the filmmaker), not on the audience's perceptual experience of the film. The same is true of my use of the terms dependence/independence and equality/inequality, which refer solely to the above-defined compositional audiovisual relationship and not to the perceived sound-image relationship.

The compositional audiovisual relationship is one of dependence in any examples of audiovisual art in which the sound and image tracks do not have the potential to stand as fully realised pieces in themselves if separated. In such examples, either a) the sound and image tracks are not fully realised pieces in themselves and instead both only serve the audiovisual realisation of their combination, or b) the sound and image tracks can only become fully realised pieces through the concurrence of the other.

These compositional audiovisual relationships can either be of dependence and inequality or dependence and equality. Examples of dependence and inequality encompass any audiovisual art in which either the sound or image track is more important than the other regarding the realisation of the resulting audiovisual piece or film. At the same time, both still rely on the other for their full realisation, as described above. Examples of dependence and equality include cases in which there is no sense that either the audio or video components are of greater importance in relation to the resulting audiovisual piece or film, while they still only function as components of this larger piece.

The compositional audiovisual relationship is one of independence only in examples of audiovisual art in which the sound and image tracks have the potential to stand as fully realised pieces in themselves if separated. These relationships can either be of independence and inequality or independence and equality. Examples of independence and inequality include audiovisual art in which the sound and image tracks were made with the intention of being able to stand as fully realised pieces before their combination, but within the context of the audiovisual piece or film, one occupies a higher hierarchical status. Examples of independence and equality would include cases in which 1) there was no sense that either audio or video components were of greater importance to the other in the realisation of the resulting audiovisual piece or

[4] See Chapter 2, section 1: '(The Emergence of) Audiovisual Experience'.

film, and 2) they were made with the intention of being able to stand as fully realised pieces before their combination.[5]

Of the four modes of compositional audiovisual relationship described above (see Table 1 below), relationships of dependence and inequality are the easiest to recognise across the field of film practices, from all traditional narrative films and most music videos to even a majority of experimental films. Examples of dependence and equality are less widespread but can be found in areas of audiovisual art that aim to directly explore the interaction between sounds and images, such as some forms of experimental film and audiovisual installations, or that seek to generate audio and visual material from shared sources, such as visual music and VJing.[6] Relationships of independence and inequality are less common, with most examples stemming from found-footage audiovisual art.

Relationships of independence and equality seem to be the most under-explored. One example appears to be the film *One[11] and 103* (1992), one of the last works by American experimental composer John Cage in collaboration with Henning Lohner, which consists of a chance-based light choreography (*One[11]*) and an experimental composition for orchestra (*103*), two independently made pieces that form the film when presented together.[7]

This discussion outlines my view that most filmic practices exhibit a compositional audiovisual relationship of dependence and/or inequality and also suggests that careful reflection is required if one wishes to explore approaches based on audiovisual independence and equality.[8]

RELATIONSHIPS OF:	DEPENDENCE	INDEPENDENCE
INEQUALITY	**Dependence and Inequality**	**Independence and Inequality**
EQUALITY	**Dependence and Equality**	**Independence and Equality**

Table 1: Visualisation of the four categories of compositional audiovisual relationships under discussion (Table by author).

Response:

I reject the notions 1) that either sounds or images need to depend on each other in filmic art and 2) that the two should exist in a hierarchy. In doing so, I open the door for myself to an approach to filmmaking where sounds and images exist as independent equals.

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[5] There are also examples of filmic art in which the compositional audiovisual relationship can at first glance seem like independence, but on closer inspection is revealed to be 'unidirectional' dependence. For example, many films from the silent era made as visual-only pieces subsequently were presented with accompanying sound tracks, either in the form of scores performed live or recordings added to digital releases. This may seem to reflect a relationship of independence, as these visual pieces were made without the intention of being presented with a specific score (even more so in cases where the score was a pre-existing piece of music that was originally intended to stand alone as a fully realised piece). However, the compositional audiovisual relationship is in fact in line with my conception of dependence. In general, the decision to present a specific piece of music as the sound track was based on how the score would work alongside the visuals (for example, the music could be chosen for how it could make the visual track more impactful, to add emotional depth, etc.). Because of this, these early film scores can be described as being dependent on the visuals for their selection. This is an example of what I describe as unidirectional dependence, where either the visuals or the audio is dependent on the other but the inverse is not the case.

[6] Annet Dekker, "Synaesthetic Performance in the Club Scene," CosignConference.org, 2003, http://www.cosignconference.org/downloads/papers/dekker_cosign_2003.pdf; Chiara Wilkinson, "Seeing Sound: The Audio-Visual Artists Driving Creative Innovation in Club Culture," DJ Mag, March 2, 2021, https://djmag.com/longreads/seeing-sound-audio-visual-artists-driving-creative-innovation-club-culture.

[7] John Cage and Henning Lohner, *One[11] and 103*, film (Germany, 1992), https://youtu.be/oUG2FNEFNls.

[8] One notable example of an artist/researcher who has been actively engaging with these ideas through their practice is Louise Harris, whose recent book gives insight into her approach to audiovisual composition and her thoughts on the field more broadly. While there are differences in her outlook and analysis and my own, I believe her engagement with the audiovisual relationship is relevant to the above discussion. Louise Harris, *Composing Audiovisually: Perspectives on Audiovisual Practices and Relationships* (Oxford, UK: Routledge, 2022).

On the Presupposition of Meaning

Critique:

Meaning tends to be presupposed in the creation of filmic art.

Discussion:

The topic of meaning is broad and permeates all fields of art, including film. Discussions surrounding meaning have relevance across filmic practices, from traditional narratives to avant-garde film and conceptual audiovisual art. However, the following discussion only concerns meaning as an element in the creation of filmic arts (i.e. the artist's intention/conceptualisation) and not the experience of meaning (i.e. the audience's interpretation/understanding). Examples of meaning used in this sense include but are not limited to any ways in which the artist intends their film to communicate, represent, or 'be about' any given message, theme, or concept.

I posit that meaning can be described as being presupposed in the majority of filmic practices. By this, I mean that it tends to be taken for granted that a film 'holds meaning' and that this meaning originates from the intentions of the filmmaker responsible for its creation. I argue that this is not only true of narrative film but also holds for much of the canon of experimental film. This is, for example, reflected in the way that film is often described as a form of language (e.g. 'cinematic language'), which occurs even in discussions of experimental work.[9]

Examples of art made without any presupposition of meaning can be readily found across the field of experimental art more broadly (such as American experimental music, Fluxus, Dada, video art, etc.). However, throughout the history of experimental film, meaning has tended to arise continually as a core aspect of the work.[10] Some notable branches of experimental film have rejected the presupposition of meaning, such as American structuralist film and British materialist film. Still, these are relatively niche branches within the broader field and do not seem to hold the same level of influence as other areas in the canon of avant-garde film.[11]

This topic has the potential to be explored in far greater depth, but for current purposes, this very brief overview serves to illustrate the main thrust of my discussion: filmic arts broadly tend to hold meaning as a presupposition and, while there is nothing inherently wrong with this, it is not in any way necessary to do so, and this has been demonstrated through the existence of art that does not presuppose meaning.

Response:

I reject the necessity of meaning as a presupposition in the creation of filmic art. In doing so, I open the door for myself to an approach to filmmaking where the sounds and images, in both content and presentation, are not reliant on any presupposed meaning.

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[9] Daisy Hirst, "What is Cinematic Language and How Do You Use It?," *Industrial Scripts*, February 17, 2021, https://industrialscripts.com/cinematic-language/.

[10] For an overview of the history of experimental filmmaking where an emphasis on meaning is present throughout, from the symbolism of pioneering experimental filmmaker Maya Deren to the metaphor-laden 'lyrical film' work of the equally influential Stan Brakhage, see P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943–2000*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). This volume also features prominent filmmaker and writer Jonas Mekas making a direct reference to the importance of meaning in the experimental film canon when discussing his fear that the rise of structural film would mark the death of symbolism and meaning-driven films, going on to then express his relief that this was not the case, showcasing how deeply meaning has been embedded in the field of experimental film; Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 323.

[11] P. Adams Sitney, "Structural Film," in *Experimental Cinema, The Film Reader*, ed. Wheeler Winston Dixon and Gwendolyn Audrey Foster (London: Routledge, 2002), 227–237; A. L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 79–90; Peter Gidal, *Materialist Film* (London: Routledge, 1989).

On Pre-Imagining Filmic Results and the Use of Materials

Critique:

Across filmic practices, audio and visual materials tend to be used to realise filmic results that have been pre-imagined.

Discussion:

By 'pre-imagining' filmic results, I mean the act of a filmmaker envisaging what the film they are making will end up being when completed, specifically in terms of how the resulting film will look and/or sound. In such a case, the finished film (or any segment therein) can, therefore, be described as a pre-imagined result. This act of pre-imagining exists across a broad spectrum and does not refer only to cases in which the entire film is pre-imagined. Additionally, while I am primarily concerned with cases where results are pre-imagined from the start of the creative process, it is also true that results can be pre-imagined throughout any stage of the process that is followed by a subsequent stage.[12]

Examples of results being pre-imagined can be found across the field of filmic practices. Perhaps the most obvious is how the results of traditional narrative films are pre-imagined in the form of a script or screenplay. Experimental filmic arts can just as easily showcase examples of pre-imagined results, depending on the approach and intentions of the filmmaker.

It is my view that pre-imagining is unnecessary in the creation of art. One only needs to look to the work by artists such as painter Jackson Pollock, choreographer Merce Cunningham, or materialist filmmaker Peter Gidal for a range of examples of artistic results that were not pre-imagined.[13] The work of John Cage, Alvin Lucier, and other prominent composers of 20th-century experimental music in America embraced the idea of indeterministic results, pushing back against the mainstream approach to music composition of pre-imagined results through traditional scores.[14] The interdisciplinary Fluxus art movement, which began in the 1960s, continued this trend of allowing results to be undetermined in advance, with an emphasis on process and experience over the result.[15] Alexander Calder revolutionised the idea of what sculptures could be by rejecting the idea of pre-imagined results and pioneering the now familiar concept of the 'mobile', a hanging sculpture consisting of elements suspended in the air moving freely so that the form of the work continually morphs according to chance.[16]

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[12] Even if results are not pre-imagined before the stage of gathering of audio and visual material, results could be pre-imagined during the material gathering stage, or during the initial editing stage, etc.

[13] Leonhard Emmerling, *Pollock: 1912–1956* (Cologne: Taschen, 2016); "Merce Cunningham", Mercecunningham.org, accessed 25 March 2021, https://www.mercecunningham.org/about/merce-cunningham/; Merce Cunningham Trust, *Merce Cunningham The Collaborator*, video, 2018, https://www.mercecunningham.org/videos/merce_collab.mp4.

[14] Alvin Lucier, *Music 109: Notes on Experimental Music* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2012); Alvin Lucier, ed., *Eight Lectures on Experimental Music* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2018); Alvin Lucier, *I Am Sitting In A Room*. Recorded 1980, Lovely Music Ltd., 1990, CD, https://youtu.be/fAxHlLK3Oyk; Martha Joseph, "Collecting Alvin Lucier's I Am Sitting in a Room," MoMA Inside Out, January 20, 2015, https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2015/01/20/collecting-alvin-luciers-i-am-sitting-in-a-room/.

[15] Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," in *Intermedia, Fluxus and the Something Else Press: Selected Writings by Dick Higgins*, ed. Steve Clay and Ken Friedman (New York: Siglio, 2018), 88–114; Ken Friedman, Owen Ken Friedman, Owen Smith, and Lauren Sawchyn, ed., *The Fluxus Performance Workbook* (London: Performance Research e-Publications, 2002).

[16] Jacob Baal-Teshuva, *Calder* (Cologne: Taschen, 2002), 21–25.

Examples such as these speak to a crucial point about the nature of art in which results are not pre-imagined, in that these results are, in fact, unknowable in advance.[17] For example, it is not the case that Pollock could have pre-imagined one of his splatter paintings before it was made but chose not to. On the contrary, his approach made pre-imagining impossible.[18] I make this point to illustrate that my critique is not based solely on the idea that most filmmakers do pre-imagine their filmic results but on the fact that most approaches make the act of pre-imagining filmic results possible. In other words, I am not so much critiquing the act of pre-imagining itself and more so critiquing approaches to filmmaking that allow filmic results to be knowable before their realisation.

The main points of this discussion have now been made, but I shall briefly explain what I mean by the use of material and how it is inseparably linked to the above concept of pre-imagined results. I consider the use of material to describe any instance in which decisions are made on how to include material in the piece of art based on how said material helps to realise an intended, pre-imagined result. A typical example of this from filmic arts is the way in which sounds and images are typically ordered (i.e. based on the filmic results desired by the filmmaker). When using materials, in a sense, the artist assigns to them a purpose based on what they think or feel the materials are (or could be) and, in doing so, reduces their existence to a practical use. In this way, the use of materials is as much about how the artist views the role the material plays in their work as it is about the specific actions they take in their approach.[19]

I have now presented my view that the pre-imagining of filmic results is made possible by approaches to filmmaking that allow filmic results to be knowable before the film is made. Additionally, I outlined how it is through the ability to use materials that such approaches enable such pre-imagined filmic results to become realised by the filmmaker. While I am not arguing that filmmakers should never pre-imagine filmic results or that there is something wrong with approaches that allow one to do so, I have instead recognised that the pre-imagining of filmic results is not in any way necessary (as evidenced by the existence of art from different disciplined in which the results were not and could not have been pre-imagined).

Response:

I reject the idea that results need to be pre-imagined and that materials should be used to realise these results. In doing so, I open the door for myself to an approach to filmmaking where filmic results are unknowable before the film is made.

* * *

The conclusion of my above critique is summarised as follows: I reject 1) the notions that either sounds or images need to depend on each other in filmic art and that the two should exist in a hierarchy, 2) the necessity of meaning as a presupposition in the creation of filmic art, and 3) the idea that results need to be pre-imagined and that materials should be used to realise these results. In doing so, I open the door for myself to an approach to filmmaking where 1) sounds and images exist as independent equals, 2) the sounds

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[17] I chose the above 20th-century examples to demonstrate the historical basis for my stance that artistic results do not need to be pre-imagined. However, many contemporary artists could equally be discussed here, such as choreographer Bill T. Jones, who has allowed the structuring of his theatrical performance pieces such as *Story Time* (2012) to be determined by chance, and installation artist Zimoun, who often allows the movement of his sound sculptures' components to be uncontrolled; Adam Hencz, "Pushing the Boundaries of Contemporary Sound Art," Artland Magazine, February 6, 2023, https://magazine.artland.com/a-journey-into-contemporary-sound-art/; Bill T. Jones, "Story/Time," New York Live Arts, July 5, 2023, https://newyorklivearts.org/event/story-time/.

[18] The Museum of Modern Art, "How to paint like Jackson Pollock – One: Number 31, 1950 – with Corey D'Augustine | IN THE STUDIO," YouTube, October 24, 2010, https://youtu.be/EncR_T0faKM.

[19] In cases where results are not pre-imagined (such as the examples given above), I choose to employ terms such as exploring, embracing or collaborating with the material, in contrast with the idea of *using* the material outlined here.

and images, in both content and presentation, are not reliant on any presupposed meaning, and 3) filmic results are unknowable before the film is made.

CHAPTER 2:
Towards a Philosophy of Experimental Filmmaking

Preliminary Remarks:

The goal of the preceding chapter was to uncover the foundational ideas underlying my approach to experimental filmmaking through a 3-part critique of established filmmaking practices. This chapter explores my conceptualisations of audiovisual experience, meaninglessness, and arbitrariness.

It is important to note that throughout the following discussions, my focus is no longer solely on the role of the filmmaker, as was the case in my critique: I am now also considering these topics from the standpoint of the viewer-listener, exploring the nature of experience as it relates to audiovisual filmic art in general and how this, in turn, relates to my desired approach to filmmaking.

This philosophical investigation, therefore, follows the 3-part structure of my critique and each section here relates directly to the corresponding section in my critique (see Fig. 2).[20] My goal is to show how the same conclusions as found in my critique, arrived at by looking outward at the filmmaking practices of others, can be independently arrived at when taking the opposite approach of looking inward and examining my philosophical stances and ideas.[21] I will conclude this chapter by showing how these concepts combine to explain my philosophy of experimental film. In doing so, the nature of my filmic art will be revealed. Only after this has been achieved can I move on to the question of how I realise such an approach in practice.

Throughout this chapter, I have chosen to use several of my own terms to describe various philosophical and psychological concepts. This is because my goal is not to offer a survey or analysis of ideas from fields such as philosophy, psychology, or cognitive science, but instead to provide insight into my own way of thinking and how these ideas relate to my creative practice.[22]

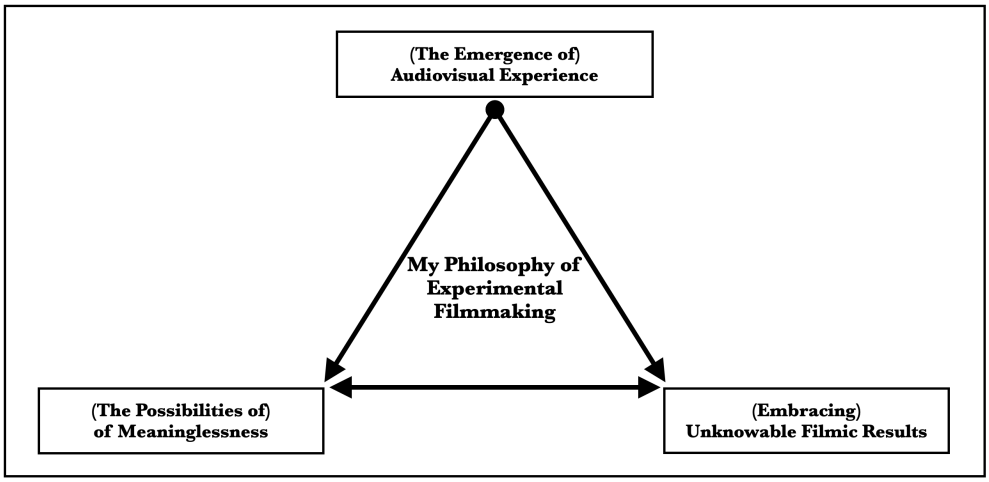


Fig. 2: Illustration of this chapter's tripartite structure, the nature of which will be discussed in more detail in the concluding section after the three main discussions have been presented.

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[20] I.e. the 3 topics of this chapter (audiovisual experience, meaninglessness, and unknowable filmic results) are intrinsically linked to the 3 parts of the preceding chapter (the compositional audiovisual relationship, meaning, and pre-imagined results, respectively).

[21] It should also be noted that the topics discussed in this chapter and the concepts I describe therein are not necessarily intended to be taken as statements of objective truth nor arguments to convince the reader of the correctness of my positions, and are rather to be taken as insights into the conceptual underpinnings of my work in order to better understand the creative practice I have been developing.

[22] In these instances, I have included information on related terms that are more commonly used in footnotes.

(The Emergence of) Audiovisual Experience

Thesis:

From the standpoint of the viewer-listener, a film's sound and video tracks do not need to exhibit a compositional audiovisual relationship of dependence.

Discussion:

When we perceive sounds and images simultaneously, we combine them through a subconscious process that, for the purposes of this discussion, I call 'internal sound-image synthesis'.[23] It is important to highlight my views that 1) this process occurs in the mind of the viewer-listener, and 2) it is an unavoidable phenomenon that takes place whenever one is seeing and hearing at the same time. It is this internal sound-image synthesis that produces within us the experience of something audiovisual. In other words, the process of internal sound-image synthesis results in what I describe as 'the emergence of audiovisual experience'. I use the term 'audiovisual emergence' to refer to the overarching process outlined here.[24]

These concepts have relevance across the broader field of philosophy of perception.[25] However, for present purposes, it is enough to consider how this relates to my conceptualisation of 'The Film' as an audiovisual entity/object/event (I use the term The Film as a stand-in for any example of audiovisual filmic art). At its core, a piece of audiovisual art consists of two parts: a 'sound track' and an 'image track'. Therefore, the audiovisual entity/object/event that is The Film exists only when these sound and image tracks are combined. However, as the combination of sounds and images can only occur in the mind of a perceiver through the process of internal sound-image synthesis, The Film can only be said to exist as a result of this perceptual process. It follows that what we call The Film is, in fact, an example of an emergent audiovisual experience and only exists internally in the mind of the viewer-listener.[26]

A phenomenon stemming from internal sound-image synthesis (and therefore a feature of emergent audiovisual experience) that is of significant importance to our discussion of The Film is what I refer to as the perceived sound-image relationship. This is the term I use to describe how simultaneously perceived sounds

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[23] My goal for the present section is to present an overview of my conceptualisation of audiovisual experience and the way it relates to my broader philosophy of experimental filmmaking and give insight into my lines of thought which underpin many of my creative decisions. Because of this, I have chosen to use several of my own terms to describe various concepts, as opposed to those standardly used in current philosophical or psychological discussions. This decision also stems from the fact that I developed these ideas by engaging with and reflecting on questions relating to the nature of the filmic art I create, and were not directly inspired or influenced by the fields of psychology or the philosophy of perception. However, for an in-depth discussion on the structure of audiovisual experience that also gives insight into a number of current thinkers' views on the topic, see Błażej Skrzypulec, "The Structure of Audio–Visual Consciousness," Synthese 198, no. 3 (April 6, 2019): 2101–27, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-019-02195-9; William Fish, "Multimodality," in *Philosophy of Perception: A Contemporary Introduction*, Second Edition (London: Routledge, 2021), 225–45.

[24] My conceptualisation of audiovisual emergence as outlined here is not intended to be taken as either a physiological description or a metaphysical thesis. I have simply recognised that in order for an experience to be described as 'audiovisual', such an experience requires both an auditory and a visual experience to occur simultaneously, and that said experiences exist internally in the mind of the perceiver. While this observation in itself may be accused of being somewhat banal, its importance lies in how it relates to my conceptualisation of filmic art, the focus of this section's following paragraph.

[25] For a survey of current topics and discussions on the philosophy of perception, see Susanna Siegel, "The Contents of Perception," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, August 30, 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/perception-contents; Casey O'Callaghan, "Auditory Perception," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, August 12, 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/perception-auditory/.

[26] When we are presented with external stimuli that are either auditory (i.e. vibrations travelling through the air) or visual (i.e. waves of light), our biological and cognitive faculties receive and interpret this in the form of sounds or images. These sounds and images can only be described as existing internally in the mind of the subject perceiving them. While this may appear to the reader as a truism, I make this point explicitly to argue against what I believe to be a misconception that watching a film is to perceive something audiovisual that exists externally, whereas I contend that because the sounds and images only exist internally, therefore something audiovisual cannot be said to exist anywhere but internally in a subject's mind as an emergent experience.

and images seem to relate to each other to the viewer-listener.[27] Internal sound-image synthesis allows the viewer-listener to combine the disparate stimuli so that an audiovisual experience can emerge, but it is the perceived sound-image relationship that determines the viewer-listener's overall experience (i.e., what they think and feel about the film they are experiencing).[28] Here, connections are made, meaning is interpreted, thoughts are provoked, and emotions are stirred.[29]

Conclusion:

The above discussion outlines my philosophy of perception as it relates to audiovisual experiences, which led to my view of The Film as an emergent audiovisual experience that only exists internally. The foundation of this philosophy rests on the concept of internal sound-image synthesis, a subconscious process that always occurs, regardless of what the auditory or visual stimuli presented to us are. Because of this, there is no reason that the compositional audiovisual relationship needs to be of dependence or inequality, not from the standpoint of the filmmaker (as stated in the first part of my critique), nor from the standpoint of the viewer-listener (as stated here).

Further Context:

Before moving on, I will discuss three thinkers whose work and ideas helped inform my thoughts and philosophy on the present topic: philosopher Immanuel Kant, specifically his exploration of experience and time (which helped me while developing my conceptualisation of perceptual experience), French filmmaker and musician Michel Chion, specifically his writings on film sound and his concept of 'synchresis' (which inspired me to think more critically on the perceived relationship between sounds and images), and pioneering Austrian experimental filmmaker Peter Kubelka, specifically his early structural films and his concept of 'the synch event' (Kubelka in this instance serving as my primary example of several equally influential filmmakers and film theorists, all of whose work is focused on exploring the audiovisual experience and perceived sound-image relationship).

Immanuel Kant and Human Experience:

The philosophy of Immanuel Kant is broad, and his extensive body of work spans the philosophical pillars of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. Concerning the current discussion, the areas of Kant's work that have most deeply resonated with me can be found in his *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, namely 1) his inquiry into the nature of human experience and 2) his philosophical insight into the nature of time.[30]

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[27] This is not to be confused with the compositional audiovisual relationship (see Chapter 1, section 1: 'On Compositional Audiovisual Relationships of Dependence and Inequality'). To illustrate another important difference between the two, the perceived sound-image relationship is intrinsically subjective, as it solely concerns the subject's perception of the sounds and images presented to them, while the compositional audiovisual relationship is objective, as it concerns the way the overall sound and image tracks are related in terms of their creation and pairing, described in terms of dependence/independence and inequality/equality.

[28] I view the perceived sound-image relationship as operating on two distinct levels: the micro and the macro. The micro level describes the way individual sounds and images appear to relate to one another on a moment-to-moment basis, whereas the macro level deals with the way the sounds and images seem to work together across longer durations (up to and including the film's full duration).

[29] It is also worth noting that in the act of pre-imagining results (see Chapter 1, section3: 'On Pre-Imagining Filmic Results and the Use of Materials'), what the filmmaker is essentially doing is attempting to influence or even determine in advance what the perceived sound-image relationship will be. Because of this element of intention, potential confusion may at times arise between the distinction between the compositional audiovisual relationship and the perceived sound-image relationship (see Chapter 1, section 1: 'On Compositional Audiovisual Relationships of Dependence and Inequality'). However, one must remember that because the film only exists internally as a subjective, perceptual experience, the perceived sound-image relationship can therefore also only exist internally, whether or not the filmmaker's intentions and actions shaped the outcome of the viewer-listener's experience.

[30] Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Gary Hatfield, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason.*

In my view, one of Kant's most significant contributions to philosophy and human knowledge more broadly is (in its most simplified form) the idea that what we experience is determined by how we experience it. While reading Kant, I was struck by the parallels I saw between this line of thinking and my own. Kant realised that to make any sense of reality and the external world, one must first consider the nature and function of our internal faculties that precede any and all experiences.[31] I have similarly recognised that any investigation into the nature of filmic art (experimental or otherwise) invites an enquiry into how the film is experienced by the viewer-listener (i.e., through the emergence of audiovisual experience).

Film is a fundamentally durational art form, and this fact has led me to become increasingly interested in the field of philosophy focused on time (commonly referred to as 'the Philosophy of Time') over the course of my research. I find Kant's discussions on time in his *Critique of Pure Reason* to resonate strongly with my own thoughts on the matter, specifically, the discussions found in the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' dealing with the ideality of time as a pure form of intuition and the three 'Analogies of Experience' which deal with the temporal aspects of experience such as persistence, causation, and simultaneity.[32]

A detailed analysis of Kant's philosophy as it relates to time and temporal experience is far beyond the scope of this current discussion, nor would it be entirely pertinent to the goals of this chapter.[33] Instead, I wish to acknowledge the impact Kant's work in this area has had on me and draw a connection between his conceptualisation of time as simply the way that we structure our perceptual experiences and my theory of internal sound-image synthesis and resulting emergent audiovisual experience, for which the temporal ordering of perceptions is a necessary precondition.[34]

Michel Chion and 'Synchresis':

Michel Chion is one of the relatively few film theorists to make sound their primary focus, a point raised by Holly Rogers in her discussion of the notable lack of academic attention given to music and sound of experimental film specifically (something she and co-editor Jeremy Barham have been valiantly attempting to correct, beginning with their work *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*).[35] Much of Chion's filmic philosophy is built around his concept of 'synchresis', a term he coined to describe "the spontaneous and irresistible weld produced between a particular sound event and a particular visual event when they occur at the same time."[36] Chion maintains that not every sound-image combination leads to synchresis, giving an example of a stream of random sounds and visuals. Some combinations come together to elicit synchresis, while others do not.[37]

Chion's contributions to ongoing discussions surrounding sound in cinema cannot be understated, and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge his work in a discussion such as this. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that in his discussions of synchresis, Chion is not talking about what I have dubbed

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[31] In the secondary literature, this is sometimes referred to as his 'Copernican Revolution', though the exact meaning of this term varies between authors and does not have enough relevance to the current topic to warrant discussion. For example, see Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Kant's Philosophical Revolution: A Short Guide to the Critique of Pure Reason* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1–3.

[32] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 59–84, 203–232.

[33] For an in-depth analysis of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* that puts forward an interpretation which I find convincing (in light of my own reading of Kant to date), see Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defence*, Revised & Enlarged Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). For a relatively brief but highly focused discussion on Kant's philosophy of time as it relates to modern-day scientific understanding, see Anguel Stefanov, *Kant's Conceptions of Space and Time and Contemporary Science* (Montreal: Minkowski Institute Press, 2015).

[34] This area of enquiry has particular relevance to my film projects that make up the latter portion of my portfolio (namely *Untitled Duration*, *SUPERPOSITION*, *Timelines*, and *Nocturnal Synthesis*) and I shall return to the topic in more detail during the relevant commentaries. I am equally interested in time as it relates to modern science, especially quantum mechanics and relativity theories, topics that will also be addressed at later stages.

[35] Holly Rogers and Jeremy Barham, ed., *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2–3.

[36] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. Claudia Gorbman, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 64.

[37] Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 64.

internal sound-image synthesis, as he describes synchresis as "a function of meaning… organised according to gestaltist laws and contextual determinations."[38] It should now be clear that synchresis can be understood as merely a potential outcome of the perceived sound-image relationship (on the micro level), and that the above discussion of emergent audiovisual experience outlines the preconditions necessary for any experience of synchresis to occur. Synchresis is a valuable concept for any discussions focused on an individual viewer-listener's experience of a film. While I find Chion's work innovative and admirable in this regard, I am concerned with the more fundamental questions of how the viewer-listener both can and does experience film in general.[39]

Peter Kubelka and Experimental Film:

My area of research has naturally led me to engage with the work of experimental filmmakers who recognise sounds and images as both having equal importance to their practice and who have, to varying degrees, made the perceived sound-image relationship and audiovisual experience more broadly a core aspect of their films. In the field of experimental film, such filmmakers are less common than one may otherwise assume. In his authoritative volume on the history of experimental film *Visionary Film: American Avant-Garde Film (1940–2000)*, P. Adam Sitney illustrates this point when discussing the work of Austrian filmmaker Peter Kubelka, writing that "Kubelka is the only film-maker I shall discuss in this book who affirms the absolute equality of importance between images and sound in cinema."[40] I am a great admirer of Kubelka's work, both his films such as *Adebar* (1957), *Schwechater* (1958), and *Arnulf Rainer* (1960) and his lectures on film theory and audiovisual synchronicity, all of which I found inspirational in the development of my filmic philosophy.[41]

After *Arnulf Rainer,* Kubelka became increasingly interested in the use of sound in film, something he made the focus of his experimental documentary *Unsere Afrikareise* (1965).[42] He has since given many lectures on his philosophy of sound cinema. One of the core concepts that runs throughout his theory of film is what he calls the 'synch event', the combination of a recorded sound and image that were not captured simultaneously.[43] In one lecture on the topic, he gives the example of a natural synch event being the ripping of a piece of paper: we see paper being ripped and simultaneously hear the sound of paper being ripped. Kubelka goes on to discuss how, in film, one can replace the sound with something else: we see paper ripping and hear a dog barking, or wind blowing, making his position clear in saying, "The greatness of sound cinema is that you are freed from this law of nature that (audiovisual) events come in sync."[44]

Other examples of filmmakers whose work I consider equally notable regarding their consideration of audiovisual experience are: John Smith (e.g., *The Girl Chewing Gum,* 1976), Lis Rhodes (e.g., *Pictures on Pink Paper,* 1982), Norman McLaren (e.g., *Synchromy,* 1971).[45] I previously remarked on the fact that one of the most comprehensive volumes on the history of experimental film, Sitney's *Visionary Film*, is surprisingly silent when it comes to the topic of the audio-visuality of film, though meaningful discussions are to be found in

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[38] Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 64.

[39] For a contemporary example of research engaging with ideas surrounding the audiovisual relationship, see: Harris, *Composing Audiovisually*, 12-29.

[40] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 288.

[41] Peter Kubelka, *Adebar,* film (Austria, 1957), https://youtu.be/1S0aoQQxzwk; Peter Kubelka, *Schwechater*, film (Austria, 1958), https://youtu.be/YEaSnvDBBtY; Peter Kubelka, *Arnulf Rainer*, film (Austria, 1960).

[42] Peter Kubelka, *Unsere Afrikareise*, film (Africa, 1965).

[43] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 289.

[44] Lucas, *Peter Kubelka On Metaphoric Cinema*, video, 2018, https://youtu.be/9vBUMBM3Phw.

[45] John Smith, *The Girl Chewing Gum*, film (UK, 1976), https://youtu.be/57hJn-nkKSA; Lis Rhodes, *Pictures on Pink Paper,* film (UK: 1982), https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-pictures-on-pink-paper-1985-online; Norman McLaren, *Synchromy*, film (Canada, 1971), https://youtu.be/UmSzc8mBJCM.

more recent works such as Nicky Hamlyn's *Film Art Phenomena*, Ming-Yuen S. Ma's *There Is No Soundtrack: Rethinking Art, Media and the Audio-visual Contract*, Danijela Kulezic-Wilson's *Sound Design is the New Score: Theory, Aesthetics, and Erotics of the Integrated Soundtrack*, and the aforementioned collection *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film* by Holly Rogers and Jeremy Barham, to name but a few.[46] However, while engaging with this work is highly rewarding for anyone interested in exploring the audiovisual nature of filmic art, an in-depth discussion on any one of these filmmakers/authors and their work is admittedly beyond the scope of this present section.[47]

Filmmakers and film theorists such as those mentioned above have all recognised the importance of the perceived sound-image relationship and the interpretive role we play when we engage with audiovisual media, and work such as theirs has greatly informed my thinking on the topic. However, I am attempting to demonstrate that for a sound-image relationship to be perceived, the sounds and images must first be combined into one audiovisual experience, something that must take place in the mind of the viewer-listener. It must be understood that what I am concerned with is not simply what the viewer-listener experiences when they watch a film, but the very fact that such an experience is able to arise when they watch a film.

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[46] Nicky Hamlyn, *Film Art Phenomena* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Ming-Yuen S. Ma, *There Is No Soundtrack: Rethinking Art, Media and the Audio-visual Contract* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020); Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, *Sound Design is the New Score: Theory, Aesthetics, and Erotics of the Integrated Soundtrack* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020); Rogers and Barham, ed., *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film.*

[47] To give 2 contemporary examples of artists whose practices actively engage with the audiovisual relationship: Carsten Nicolai, a sound/visual artists who uses coding, mathematical patterns, randomness, and digital error in their attempts to visualise sound, and audiovisual artist Weirdcore who uses computer programmes such as Max/MSP to produce music videos and live video art in their collaborations with Aphex Twin; Hencz, "Pushing the Boundaries of Contemporary Sound Art"; Wilkinson, "Seeing Sound".

(The Possibilities of) Meaninglessness

Thesis:

From the standpoint of the viewer-listener, 1) meaning in filmic art does not need to be presupposed by the filmmaker because meaning arises subjectively from one's emergent audiovisual experience, and 2) filmic art made without meaning expands the possibilities for interpretation and democratises experience.

Discussion:

When a viewer-listener perceives a film (i.e., simultaneous sound and video tracks), my view is that audiovisual meaning is produced in their mind from the internal process I call interpretation that arises immediately from emergent audiovisual experience.[48] This interpretative process relies on the more fundamental process at which the sound or image meaning is produced in the mind (i.e., how individual sounds or images are interpreted as being what they are), which occurs during sound-image perception. In this way, the interpretation of audiovisual meaning can be thought of as the synthesis of the meanings produced from individual sounds and images.

By 'meaning', I do not refer solely to the interpretive sense (e.g., what the combined sounds and images mean in terms of concepts, subtext, metaphor, etc.) but to the entire remit of understanding (e.g., in the case of traditionally employed 'sync sound', understanding that the sounds and images presented at the same time are occurring simultaneously in the context of the film).[49] Meaning, in my use of the term, therefore, relates broadly to how a viewer-listener's audiovisual experience of the film can be said to be understood, the thoughts it leads to, and the emotional responses it evokes. In this sense, while the process of internal sound-image synthesis allows audiovisual experience to emerge, it is the process of interpretation that determines what said audiovisual experience ends up being; in other words, meaning qualifies audiovisual experience.

All meaning arising from the perception of audiovisual media is definitionally subjective given its origin in the subject's mind; this is opposed to it being an objective feature of the external world, which cannot be the case given that the audiovisual experience itself only exists internally. While some may consider audiovisual meaning to be something that exists externally, independently of the subject who then can 'uncover' said meaning through interpretation, my stance is that audiovisual meaning cannot be considered in an objective sense separated from the subject because it is only through the subject's internal process of sound-image synthesis that audiovisual experience can emerge. In other words, the subject's internal process of interpretation generates meaning as part of their subjective perceptual experience of audiovisual media.

In filmic art in which the filmmaker presupposes meaning during the process of creation, the meaning produced by the viewer-listener as part of their subjective audiovisual experience is continually shaped by the intentions of the filmmaker who can combine sounds and images in ways that lead to the desired meanings being interpreted. Because of this, there is a sense in which it is an implicate goal of the viewer-listener to interpret the correct meaning intended by the filmmaker so that the film can then be understood; but what of cases in which the filmic art in question has no presupposed meaning?

In filmic art that is not made with any presupposed meaning, such as certain areas of video art and experimental film, the viewer-listener will nevertheless produce meaning from the sounds and images they perceive, for this is an unavoidable process that is intrinsically linked to the equally inevitable internal sound-

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[48] While I am aware that the question of how meaning is understood, assigned, and/or produced is central to the fields of psychology and philosophy (specifically branches such as the philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, and phenomenology), in the present section I have chosen to use my own terms to explain the concepts I am addressing in order to best represent the way in which I conceptualise my filmmaking practice (as was the case in the previous discussion regarding audiovisual experience).

[49] It is important to note that my use of the term meaning does not refer to aspects such as value, worth or significance (as it can do in the in common expressions such as 'the meaning of life').

image synthesis.[50] However, as opposed to when watching a film made by a creator who intended the audience to perceive a particular meaning, here the viewer-listener can freely interpret meanings that are uniquely personal to them and simultaneously not in conflict with a supposed 'correct' interpretation (because in this case there is no presupposed meaning to be correctly interpreted). This leads to the meanings interpreted by all viewer-listeners (including the filmmaker) being equally valid. Moreover, by removing the notion of meaning as an external element of the film, the result is that the possibilities are thrown wide open to all interpretations, which are only limited by the viewer-listener's personal experience of the audio and visual material, as is the case in much abstract art.[51]

Because all audiovisual meaning that the viewer-listener experiences only exists in their mind, they are not merely perceiving filmic art passively and are instead actively creating their experience of the film through their perceptual faculties.[52] In this way, each viewer-listener experiences a unique version of the film that is personal to them, all of which are equally valid as no singular essential version exists. This active role the viewer-listener plays when engaging with filmic arts is a crucial aspect of my filmic philosophy, particularly how it aligns with my desire to explore films made without any presupposition of meaning.

Conclusion:

The observations above lead to the following conclusions: 1) the viewer-listener produces meaning as part of their audiovisual experience, regardless of whether any meaning was presupposed by the filmmaker, 2) if the film is 'meaningless' then the possibilities for interpreting meaning are vastly expanded, and 3) without any meaning being intended by the filmmaker, the interpretations of all viewer-listeners are made equally valid, thus democratising the filmic experience. Because of this, I believe it is not necessary to presuppose meaning in the creation of filmic art and that, furthermore, there is a solid case to be made for the artistic merits of creating films without any intended meaning.

Further Context:

Meaning and Objectivity:

Before discussing some areas of my research that have informed my thinking, I will attempt to clarify an illusion that can easily arise in discussions such as this: certain experiences of audiovisual meaning seem to be 'objective' (contrary to my claim that all meaning is inherently subjective) whereas others are merely 'subjective'. For example, seeing a video of a dog and hearing the sound of barking leads to the seemingly objective audiovisual meaning of a barking dog. In contrast, it is less certain what seeing an image of a stormy sky and hearing the sound of a single piano key being pressed could lead to in terms of the meaning that arises in the mind of a viewer-listener. If both examples were to be presented to a group of viewer-listeners, it could be assumed that in the former, the meaning that is interpreted would be broadly similar throughout the group and could, therefore, appear more objective. At the same time, the latter could easily lead to a variety of contrasting meanings arising that seem to be more subjective.

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[50] Of relevance to this area of discussion are the psychological concepts of 'pareidolia' and 'apophenia', which are defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as "the tendency to perceive a specific, often meaningful image in a random or ambiguous visual pattern," and "the tendency to perceive a connection or meaningful pattern between unrelated or random things (such as objects or ideas)," respectively. "pareidolia," Merriam-Webster, accessed July 16, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pareidolia; "Pareidolia," Wikipedia, accessed July 16, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pareidolia; "apophenia," Merriam-Webster, accessed July 16, 2023, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apophenia;

[51] The degree of abstraction of the sounds and images also plays a large role in determining the scope of these possibilities. For example, even if there is no presupposed meaning, if the audio and visual material are relatively concrete and occur in familiar combinations, there is an undeniable impact on how many ways this will be interpreted. There is an important discussion to be had on this point, but I will return to it in a later section focused on my filmmaking aesthetic (see Chapter 4, section 2: 'Aesthetics of Abstraction and Lo-Fi Materials').

[52] See the previous section for my discussion of film as an example of emergent audiovisual experience and, therefore, something that only exists internally.

However, this idea of certain meanings being more objective than others should be revised.[53] The point here is that all kinds of meaning, even that which is commonly seen to be objective, arise from the internal process of interpretation. Therefore, it must be understood that even in cases where there is an overwhelming consensus amongst viewer-listeners as to what the audio and visual material taken together mean, such as in the above example of the sound-image combination of the dog barking, it is only through the purely subjective internal process of interpretation that meaning can arise for each viewer-listener. It is also important to understand that I am not arguing that sounds and images cannot in themselves hold meaning (another topic beyond the scope of the present discussion) but that any meaning arising from the combination of sounds and images is inherently subjective due to the nature of audiovisual experience.

Meaning(lessness) and Philosophy:

Meaning is a topic that permeates almost all fields of enquiry in philosophy and art. Throughout my research, I have encountered the ideas of many philosophers and artists that have helped inform and expand my understanding of meaninglessness in terms of the possibilities it offers. As such, I cannot move on without acknowledging some of the works that have helped me while developing my filmmaking practice and philosophy.

One such work is Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, specifically its first major section ('Analytic of the Beautiful'), in which he explores the concept of beauty as it relates to our ability to judge things aesthetically (i.e. judgments of taste).[54] Kant recognised that the aesthetic quality of beauty is not directly tied to any utility or rationale and is inherently a subjective judgment. However, the person perceiving something to be beautiful naturally feels that their response is justified and that there is a sense in which judgments of beauty are, in some sense, objectively valid. Kant uses the term 'subjectively universal' to describe this idea of a judgment that is necessarily subjective but nevertheless carries with it a sense of objectivity.[55] This strand of Kant's philosophy has helped me more fully realise that art does not lose any validity or legitimacy when made without meaning since one's experience of art is always subjective, as are all aesthetic judgments.

Another influential work is James Tartaglia's *Philosophy in a Meaningless Life: A System of Nihilism, Consciousness and Reality*, particularly the early chapters that deal with his upbeat take on philosophical nihilism.[56] Tartaglia posits that the prospect of life and the universe having no ultimate meaning isn't cause for despair and that, on the contrary, this nihilistic outlook should not be feared but embraced, arguing that without the prospect of an underlying meaning of life, one has the freedom to determine one's own meaning and embrace life simply for what it is. To call something 'meaningless' often carries negative connotations in both art and philosophy, and I appreciate the way Tartaglia pushes back against this, something I found helpful while coming to my current understanding of the role meaning plays (and does not play) in my practice.[57]

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[53] This illusion arises in part due to the common use of the term 'objective' to mean 'unbiased' or 'not based on one's own subjectivity' being blurred with the more correct use of the term as referring to objects. For a relatively brief but in-depth investigation into the topic of objectivity, see Stephen Gaukroger, *Objectivity: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[54] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 35–74.

[55] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 70.

[56] James Tartaglia, *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life: A System of Nihilism, Consciousness and Reality* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 1–60.

[57] In addition to Nihilism, Tartaglia also discusses 2 other prominent philosophies that directly focus on meaning and meaninglessness, namely Existentialism (the core idea being that one makes one's own meaning in life), Absurdism (the core idea being that there is no reason for an ultimate meaning in life). Another work on this topic I found to be enlightening was Nolan Gertz's *Nihilism*, in which he traces the many threads of nihilism throughout the history of Western Philosophy from the time of Socrates to the present day. I also found the work *The Myth of Sisyphus* by French Absurdist philosopher Albert Camus to be very inspiring for its stark rejection of the necessity of seeking higher meaning, though I admittedly found my reading of Tartaglia and Gertzs' work had more impact on my own philosophy and practice; Nolan Gertz, *Nihilism*, (MA: The MIT Press, 2019); Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, trans. Justin O'Brien, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2013).

John Cage's experimental composition *Lecture on Nothing* (a 'composed talk' delivered according to a written score) helped greatly in informing my thoughts on the possibilities that arise when meaning is undetermined.[58] The piece functions as both an overview and an embodiment of Cage's zen-inspired philosophy that underlies his experimental music practice, a philosophy that embraces concepts such as silence, chance, and the unknown. Early in the piece, Cage reflects on the nature of the lecture, describing it as being "like an empty glass into which at any moment anything may be poured."[59] While Cage was here musing on the concepts of duration, form, and content, I have found this to be an inspiring idea for my thoughts on the audience's experience of meaning in my films, whereby I can think of my films as being represented by an empty glass that the viewer-listener can then fill with meaning through their experience.[60]

In *Nothingness and the Meaning of Life: Philosophical Approaches to Ultimate Meaning Through Nothing and Reflexivity*, Nicholas Waghorn explores the concept of nothingness through the lens of a wide range of philosophers, with a particular focus on the writings of Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, Rudolph Carnap, and Ludwig Wittgenstein.[61] Throughout the book, Warghorn discusses the many ways nothing can and has been conceptualised, with the recurring emphasis on the complex problems raised by any attempts to give the idea of 'nothing' a definition (something Waghorn argues to be impossible given that "to define something is always to predicate something of it").[62] Compared to other works I encountered during my research, there is less of a clear connection between my work and Waghorn's. Nevertheless, I found his survey of how many great thinkers have struggled and dealt with the concept of nothingness and meaning to be highly inspiring in developing my own philosophy.

Finally, the work of several experimental filmmakers from both the British and American structural film movements has also served as a source of inspiration: Peter Gidal, Kurt Kren, Michel Snow, and Andy Warhol.[63] These are all examples of filmmakers who rejected the supposed necessity of meaning in their work, focusing instead on aspects of filmic art such as structure, form, method, and material.[64]

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[58] John Cage, "Lecture on Nothing", in *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage 50th Anniversary Edition* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 109–128.

[59] Cage, *Silence*,110.

[60] This metaphor also has relevance to a core aspect of my methodology which I refer to as my 'process-first' approach to filmmaking, to be discussed in Chapter 3, section 2: 'Process-first Filmmaking as a Rejection of the Presupposition of Meaning'.

[61] Nicholas Waghorn, *Nothingness and the Meaning of Life: Philosophical Approaches to Ultimate Meaning Through Nothing and Reflexivity* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2017).

[62] Waghorn, *Nothingness and the Meaning of Life*, 3.

[63] While a discussion of these filmmakers could be justified here for how it relates to my conceptualisation of meaninglessness, I choose to only briefly mention them here as I will address their work when discussing the methodological aspects of my filmmaking practice in Chapter 3, section 2: 'Process-first Filmmaking as a Rejection of the Presupposition of Meaning'.

[64] Also relevant to this discussion is the more recent work of artists who have embraced digital technologies in their practices. There is a rich potential for producing abstract and non-referential audio and visual material using new technologies, an example of this being the work of London-based visual artist Rachel Noble, whose art explores texture and abstraction over intellectual meaning, see: Wilkinson, "Seeing Sound"; For a discussion on the various ways artists are using digital tools to create art, see: Michael Rush, "The Digital in Art," in *New Media in Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 180–239.

(Embracing)
Unknowable Filmic Results

Thesis:

1) From the standpoint of the viewer-listener, it is not necessary for the results of filmic art to have been pre-imagined by the filmmaker, and 2) the concept of unknowable filmic results offers an alternative approach to filmmaking that is best described as experimental.

Discussion:

When a viewer-listener perceives a piece of filmic art, I see it as being in no way necessary for the sounds and images they perceive to have been pre-imagined by the filmmaker. This is because their audiovisual experience emerges from the perceptual process of internal sound-image synthesis and, as part of this experience, audiovisual meaning is produced subjectively; none of this requires the sounds and images to be presented according to the intentions and pre-imagining of the filmmaker.[65]

In contrast to pre-imagined filmic results are what I call 'unknowable filmic results'.[66] I use this term to describe when sounds and/or images in a film have been determined in such a way that the filmmaker could not know in advance what the outcome would be (whether it be in terms of their material content, aesthetic, arrangement, selection, processing, etc.).[67]

My recognition that it is not necessary to pre-imagine my filmic results and that unknowable filmic results offer a possible alternative is, for me, enough to justify my desire to explore an approach to filmmaking that embraces unknowable filmic results. However, beyond this justification, my embrace of unknowable filmic results is best understood in regard to the way it explains the nature of my filmmaking practice, which is, at its very core, experimental.

I use the term 'experimental' in the same way as John Cage, who, in his essay *Experimental Music: Doctrine,* explained that his use of the word experimental to describe his music should be understood "not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success or failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown."[68] While there are many dissimilarities between my practice and Cage's, they are very much aligned in this regard.[69] By taking an approach in which my filmic results are unknowable, the act of my filmmaking becomes an experiment, and, as such, my use of the terms 'experimental filmmaking' and 'experimental film' to describe my practice and filmic art is indebted to Cage.[70]

I have found that this idea of turning the act of filmmaking into an experiment leads to a creative practice that is deeply rewarding for me as an artist, particularly because of how it allows me to engage with

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[65] I include this point only briefly in order to make clear that the conclusion I reached in the 3rd section of my critique of established filmmaking practices (that I reject the idea that results need to be pre-imagined and that materials should be used to realise these results) can be arrived at not only by considering the necessity of pre-imagining results from the standpoint of the filmmaker but also from that of the viewer-listener, in light of my discussion of how I view audiovisual experience in the first section of the present chapter.

[66] In the 3rd section of my critique, I outlined my reasoning for why unknowable filmic results can be considered as being opposed to pre-imagined results. The same reasoning applies regardless of whether pre-imagined/unknowable results are being considered from the standpoint of the filmmaker or the viewer-listener, so I will not reiterate my previous points on this. I am also not stating that unknowable results are the only alternative to pre-imagined results, but that this is the alternative that I choose to explore.

[67] In the third section of the following chapter on my methodology, I will discuss how I ensure that my films' filmic results are unknowable to me in advance of them being made. For the present chapter, my aim is simply to give insight into why I have decided to take this approach.

[68] John Cage, "Experimental Music: Doctrine", in *Silence*, 13.

[69] For an example of such dissimilarities, Cage was concerned with the attempt to remove all performer/composer biases from his music and therefore chose not to allow improvisation in his compositions, whereas improvisation is a core part of my compositional methodology.

[70] For another example of John Cage's writing on the experimental nature of his practice, see John Cage, "Experimental Music", in *Silence*, 10–11.

my own completed films as a viewer-listener. When I watch one of my films, I do not experience it 'as I had intended it' because there was no intended realisation.[71] Because of this, I can engage with my films less as a creator observing their creation and more as a viewer-listener experiencing the sounds and the images. As I see it, the act of creation occurs at this viewing/listening stage, when I actively bring the film into existence as it emerges in the form of my audiovisual experience.[72]

I am fascinated by the nature of human perceptual experience and, as an artist working with both sound- and image-based media, it is ultimately this ability of the viewer-listener to perceive sounds and images simultaneously and to have an audiovisual experience emerge that enables my art to exist in the way that it does. For me, it is enough to let the sounds and images that make up my films simply exist as sounds and images, allowing the film to emerge as an audiovisual experience; and, as far as my own practice is concerned, I find this to be far more creatively engaging than using sounds and images to present some pre-imagined audiovisual experience.

Conclusion:

In the discussion above, I stated my view that given the way viewer-listeners' audiovisual experiences arise, it is not necessary for filmic results to have been pre-imagined by the filmmaker. I outlined my thoughts on embracing unknowable filmic results, which results in a filmmaking process that may be called experimental. Finally, I explained how I find this approach rewarding as an artist and offered insight into the vital role this plays in my experimental film philosophy and practice.

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Towards a Philosophy of Experimental Filmmaking

The three major strands of my philosophy of experimental filmmaking have now been presented. As mentioned in the forgoing preliminary remarks, I structured this chapter around three separate discussions that mirrored my critique of established filmmaking practices. In both chapters, I ultimately arrived at the same conclusions regarding the filmmaking approach I wish to explore.[73] In my critique, the discussions and conclusions drawn from them were entirely separable from one another. For example, one could take up my critique on the presupposition of meaning and choose to explore an approach to filmmaking that is in line with this without having to also accept or adhere to my other two critiques on the compositional audiovisual relationship or pre-imagined results.

However, in the present chapter, I wanted to reveal how these three lines of thinking are intrinsically linked in the context of my creative practice and underlying philosophy. I believe they are better thought of as three pillars that work together to form the foundation of my philosophy of experimental film as opposed to independent philosophical stances I have simply grouped together.

This can be shown in several ways, the first concerning how the conclusions of each of the three discussions all stem from a singular line of my philosophical thought regarding the emergence of audiovisual experience. If audiovisual experience is understood as an emergent phenomenon that occurs in the mind of the viewer-listener through the process of internal sound-image synthesis, this leads to the understanding that

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[71] For the same reason, neither is any other viewer-listener experiencing the film as I had intended it.

[72] The same is true for any viewer-listener, each of whom actively brings the film into existence as it emerges in the form of their audiovisual experience.

[73] In the conclusion of Chapter 1, I presented the following statement summarising the kind of experimental filmmaking my practice seeks to explore: "I open the door for myself to an approach to filmmaking where 1) sounds and images exist as independent equals, 2) the sounds and images, in both content and presentation, are not reliant on any presupposed meaning, and 3) filmic results are unknowable before the film is made." The same conclusions were arrived at in the present chapter independently of any of the points made as part of my critique of established filmmaking practices.

'the film' only exists internally as a subjective audiovisual experience. From this, my view is that the following three observations and conclusions can all be derived:

- Sounds and images in filmic art don't need to depend on each other or exist in a hierarchy because an audiovisual experience will always emerge regardless of the compositional audiovisual relationship. Therefore, it is possible for a film's sounds and images to exist as independent equals.
- It is not necessary to presuppose meaning in filmic art because meaning will always arise as an intrinsic part of audiovisual experience. Therefore, it is possible for sounds and images not to be based on any presupposed meaning intended by the filmmaker.
- Filmic results don't need to be pre-imagined because an audiovisual experience will always emerge regardless of whether or not the sounds and images were pre-imagined. Therefore, it is possible for filmic results to be unknowable before the film is made.

This in itself shows how these three foundational strands of my practice are intrinsically linked and are not, in fact, separable in my philosophy of experimental film. However, one does not need to accept my ideas about the emergence of audiovisual experience in order to understand how deeply these three strands are interconnected because the same connectedness can also be seen when taking the inverse approach and taking any of the three conclusions as the premise from which the other two lines of thought naturally follow.

For example, consider the idea of accepting unknowable filmic results as a standalone approach. If the filmic results are unknowable before the film is made, then meaning cannot be presupposed as it is not known what sounds and images will be seen and heard together (which causes audiovisual meaning to arise). Furthermore, the compositional audiovisual relationship will naturally be of independence and equality (because the unknowable nature of the filmic results means that the filmmaker is not deciding which sounds and images to present together based on what one offers the other, nor are they prioritising one over the other).

Or begin instead with the idea of rejecting the need to presuppose meaning. If a film is to be made without presupposing any intended meaning, then it follows that it is not necessary for the filmmaker to pre-imagine filmic results. Therefore, it is perfectly valid for the sounds and images to be treated as independent equals (in both cases because there is no presupposed meaning that requires a specific audiovisual outcome in order to be realised).

Or, finally, take as the premise the idea of allowing a film's sounds and images to exist as independent equals. If this approach is taken, then it is natural to reject the ideas of presupposing meaning and of pre-imagining filmic results on practical grounds (because having an intended audiovisual meaning or audiovisual result in mind would mean that the sounds and images are dependent on the other in order to realise the intentions of the filmmaker, going against the idea of audiovisual independence).[74]

It should now be recognised that, to fully understand my creative practice, the three main pillars of my filmmaking philosophy should be understood both as separate areas of thought and, even more crucially, as being intrinsically interlinked. With this in mind, I will now turn to the question of how I apply these ideas in practice in the following chapter, where I discuss my experimental filmmaking methodology.

[74] This way of explaining the connected nature between my three philosophical ideas on practical grounds will be thoroughly explored in the following chapter on my methodological approaches.

CHAPTER 3:
Advancing an Experimental Filmmaking Methodology

Preliminary Remarks:

With the concepts raised by my critique of established filmmaking practices and my experimental film philosophy in mind, this chapter explores how these ideas relate to and inform my practical filmmaking methodology.

This chapter follows the tripartite structure established by the previous two chapters, examining my approach to filmmaking through the lens of three core ideas under the following headings: Methodological Approaches towards Audiovisual Independence and Equality, Process-first Filmmaking as a Rejection of the Presupposition of Meaning, and Compositional Processes of Randomisation and Improvisation (see Fig. 3).

The first part deals with how I approach making my films in general and outlines the type of filmmaking I am exploring, focusing on how I achieve compositional audiovisual relationships of independence and equality. The second part then explains how this type of filmmaking invites what I call a 'process-first' approach and how this allows me to make films without presupposing meaning. The final part shows how this approach leads to unknowable filmic results by including randomisation and improvisation in my compositional processes.

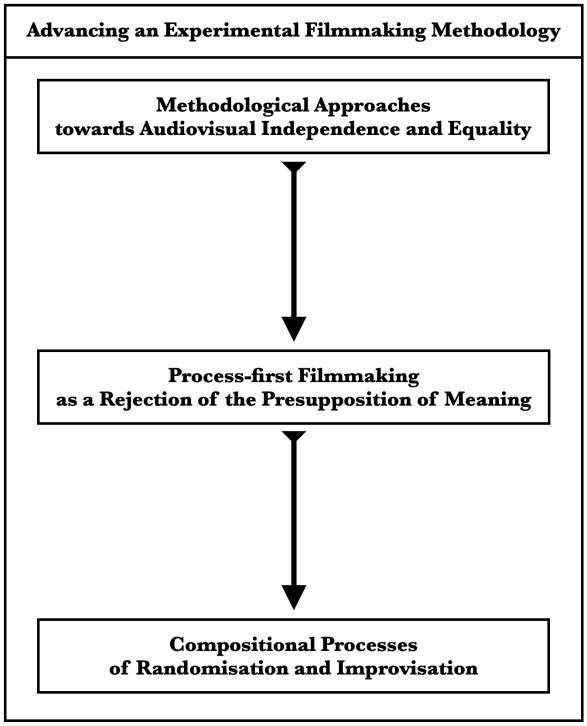


Fig. 3: Illustration of this chapter's structure.

Methodological Approaches towards Audiovisual Independence and Equality

I have developed three main methodological approaches to making my films that align to varying degrees with my desire to explore compositional audiovisual relationships of independence and equality. The first two approaches are the best representatives of my overall filmmaking methodology, with the third approach being an example of how I have explored the outer edges of my philosophical thinking on the compositional audiovisual relationship and sound-image synchronisation.

These approaches emerged organically as I continued working on film projects throughout my research (instead of conceptualising three separate approaches in advance and then exploring each in turn). Because of this, these approaches are not strictly defined, and there is a degree of overlap between them. As such, they are best thought of as helpful ways of distinguishing the methodological trends in my filmmaking practice.

Approach 1: Entirely separate audio-only and visual-only pieces

The first approach is to treat the film's sound and image tracks as two completely separate pieces of art, one consisting solely of sounds and the other solely of images, only combining the two pieces after they have been completed.

It is true that I describe all of my films in terms of three main elements: the image track (interchangeably referred to as the visual track or video track), the sound track (interchangeably referred to as the audio track), and the film (i.e., the audiovisual experience that emerges in the mind of the viewer-listener when perceiving the video track and audio track simultaneously).[75] However, in this approach, the sound and image tracks are made as standalone, fully realised pieces in their own right. My films made in this way can, in fact, be described in terms of three equally valid pieces of art, not just elements: a visual-only piece, an audio-only piece, and an audiovisual piece. In other words, one can watch one of these films with the sound muted or listen to the audio track without looking at the screen and still experience a fully formed piece of art.

Treating the audio and video tracks as independent, separate pieces means that they have no connection in terms of material or process (i.e., the way they are made and the sounds/images they consist of are unrelated to each other) and that there is no influence from either piece on the other (i.e., the decisions made in the making of either audio or video piece do not impact any decisions made in the other). Nevertheless, there are some important ways in which these audio and visual tracks still share a connection, even while remaining independent and fully realised pieces.

Firstly, they are connected by the fact that, as the filmmaker, I am making them with the knowledge that they will ultimately be paired to form a piece of filmic art (as opposed to making various standalone sound and image pieces and only deciding to pair certain ones after the fact).

Secondly, they are connected by a shared duration, which ensures they are treated as equally important pieces in terms of time spent experiencing them. This is a point of connection, not of dependence, because I must always decide on the duration before I make any further decisions on either sound or image tracks (as opposed to deciding the duration for the video track, which then determined that of the sound track, meaning that the reason for the sound track's duration depended on that of the video track).

Thirdly, there can be a shared source of inspiration behind the two pieces, but only as long as this inspiration comes before any development of either audio or video pieces. For example, I may decide to explore some idea creatively in general. Then, I begin considering this concept as it would relate to a piece of

[75] See Chapter 2, section 1: '(The Emergence of) Audiovisual Experience'.

sonic art and a piece of visual art, the initial inspiration branching off into two disconnected pieces that develop in parallel but without one influencing or being dependent on the other.

This approach presents some major advantages while also presenting some challenges that must be properly recognised for the approach to be successful. The primary advantage is that this approach encapsulates the idea that the sounds and images in filmic art do not need to exist in a relationship of dependence or inequality, an idea lying at the core of my critique of established filmmaking practices and my philosophy of experimental filmmaking. This approach also allows me, as an artist with a background in both visual and sonic arts, to take full advantage of the scope of my creativity and artistic abilities.

I previously mentioned that these pieces are necessarily connected by the fact that I know that they will be paired at the end of the process. The main challenge raised by this approach is that it requires a high degree of discipline on my part in maintaining the separation between the audio and visual pieces. There is admittedly a potential for my creative decisions made while working on one piece to be influenced by my choices made while working on the other, consciously or subconsciously, which can be difficult to avoid, even through a disciplined approach. However, this challenge is almost entirely alleviated by the fact that my filmmaking methodology incorporates randomisation throughout the various stages of the process, leading to results that are unknowable in advance, which essentially renders it impossible for me to determine the outcome of either audio or visual pieces based on the outcome of the other.[76]

Other challenges are presented by the demanding nature of creating multiple pieces of art at once, where a requirement is that I treat them as equally important pieces. Potential difficulties can arise whether I divide my time between making the sound and image pieces simultaneously or if instead I give more focus to one piece before the other. I mention these challenges to make the point that while they all could be viewed as potential downsides to this methodological approach, they simply require a level of dedication to the tenets of my filmmaking philosophy and a desire to stay true to myself and the filmmaking process I have been developing. My experience making films this way and navigating the challenges it presents has been highly rewarding, and it has dramatically expanded my creativity and philosophical understanding of my practice.[77]

Approach 2: Separate audio-only and visual-only pieces realised from a common compositional process

The second approach also treats the audio and video tracks as fully realised pieces that can stand alone in their own right, but in this case, instead of being entirely unrelated, they are both made according to the same creative process. By this, I mean that I first develop a compositional process that can be equally realised with either audio or visual material, not favouring one over the other. I then make what are essentially two distinct 'versions' of the piece that are both based on the same creative process, one taking the form of sounds and one taking the form of images.[78]

While these audio and visual pieces share a connection through the compositional process, they exist as fully realised pieces of art that are in no way dependent on the other and can, therefore, function separately as standalone works. The final point in this approach is to combine the audio and video pieces so that the resulting filmic art ultimately presents an audio, visual and audiovisual exploration of the one compositional process at hand.

The advantages and challenges are much the same as those regarding the first approach discussed above. However, this approach has the added benefit of allowing me as a creative artist to fully immerse

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[76] I will expound on this point throughout the forthcoming section of this chapter titled 'Compositional Processes of Randomisation and Improvisation'.

[77] The films included in this portfolio in which I explored this methodological approach are: the *NOVEMBER* film series, the *Collision*, *Overlap*, and *Formation* trio, *Dice Roll*, and *Untitled Duration*.

[78] This point will receive further clarification when I focus my discussion on the way I approach filmmaking through the lens of process composition in the forthcoming section of this chapter titled 'Process-first Filmmaking as a Rejection of the Presupposition of Meaning'.

myself in a given compositional idea more completely as I explore the possibilities offered by both sonic and visual realisations.[79]

Approach 3: Audiovisual compositional processes

The third approach is less defined than those discussed above. It is better thought of as a general trend that describes and connects the processes I composed in the making of *FRAMERATES*, *[sync] I*, [*sync] II*, and *AUDIOVISUALS*. While I will reserve discussion on the specifics of how I made these films and their processes for relevant commentaries, I will now briefly outline the conceptual connection between them to give an overview of my third methodological approach.

Like the second approach, this third approach involves one compositional process that is applied to audio and visual material. However, in this approach, the process is not applied to the two types of media separately to form two equal but independent realisations of the piece; instead, the process here is inherently *audiovisual.* By this, I mean that the idea of audiovisual synchronisation is an integral element of the process by which the audio and video tracks are created, and therefore, the process actively determines how the sounds and images are to be combined.

In my work to date, this has occurred in two ways. The first is that the process is applied to both forms of media in parallel (as in the case of *FRAMERATES* and *AUDIOVISUALS*), meaning that the editing decisions of one track are connected to the editing decisions of the other. The second is that the process is applied to both simultaneously (as in the case of *[sync] I* and *[sync] II*), meaning that the editing decisions affect both types of media at the same time, and there is no sense in which the audio and video tracks are being made separately. It is important to recognise that in these instances, one set of editing decisions equally influences both tracks, as it is not the case that the editing decisions of one track occur first and influence the outcome of the other (in which case, the latter track would be dependent on the other).

The kinds of processes that fall under this category of approaches are all based on the idea of exploring audiovisual synchronisation. The sounds and images themselves still exist as entirely independent equals; it is just that where they are placed in time is intrinsically linked and co-determined. In this way, the sound and image tracks are not to be considered as fully standalone pieces as was the case in the previous two approaches, but this is not because they rely on the other to achieve their own realisation: they are not intended to be realised on their own and instead only exist as an element of the audiovisual experience that is the resulting film.

The main advantage of this approach is that it expands the scope of my methodology by introducing ways to explore the possibilities of audiovisual emergence in my films. At the same time, they present internal challenges to my filmmaking practice, as there is a sense in which these films operate on the boundaries of my filmic philosophy. They certainly defy the idea that the compositional audiovisual relationship should be one of dependence or equality, but they also question the very notion of compositional audiovisual independence through compositional processes that are inherently audiovisual from the point of conception, not at the point of completion.

Brief Note on 'Multimedia' Art:

My philosophical approach to filmmaking methodology is related to the areas of art that are based on exploring more than one form of media and seeking to embrace the creative potentials offered by their varying materials fully. I am here referring to art generally described by the umbrella term 'multimedia'. One historically significant example is the work of Fluxus artist Dick Higgins and his concept of 'intermedia',

[79] The films included in this portfolio in which I explored this methodological approach are: *XENOBLAST*, *SUPERPOSITION*, *Timelines*, and *Nocturnal Synthesis*.

which captures the idea of art that lies between the differing types of media.[80] Other prominent examples include media-artist Randall Parker, whose interdisciplinary practice spans sound art, live performance, and a focus on new technologies, audiovisual artist Szabina Péter, whose recent work has combined installation, photography, video art, and electronic music, and experimental filmmaker Shinkan Tamaki, who has explored visual installations, live performances, and analogue photography. [81]

I do not regularly use terms such as multimedia or intermedia to describe my work, though I would not take any real issue if others found the terms helpful in understanding my filmic practice. However, I consider my films not to exist between or across the sounds and images but to emerge from their combination through perceptual experience. In other words, I am most interested in the kinds of experiences that can arise when different forms of sense perception coincide.[82]

[80]Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," in *Intermedia*, 24–28.

[81] Mark Garry, "A Survey of Four Contemporary Sound Artists," ARROW@TU Dublin, March 18, 2002, https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1046&context=aaschadpart; Andrew Hugill, *The Digital Musician*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2019), 261-62; Szabina Péter and Kristóf János Bodnár, "Versions of Me," Blanche the Vidiot, 2024, https://project-blanche.com/versions-of-me/; Agnieszka Kiejziewicz, "The Technologies of Experimental Japanese Filmmakers in the Digital Era," *TransMissions: The Journal of Film and Media Studies* 1, no. 1 (2016): 99–114, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326881901_The_technologies_of_experimental_Japanese_filmmakers_in_the_digital_era.

[82] I freely admit that this distinction between the concepts of multimedia, intermedia, and emergence may seem overly pedantic and I simply offer this insight in order to shed some further light on my own conceptualisation of my artistic practice, not in an attempt to convince the reader against ever thinking that my work could be described as multimedia or intermedia.

Process-first Filmmaking as a Rejection of the Presupposition of Meaning

In the previous chapters, I have given my view that it is not necessary to presuppose meaning when making filmic art and that, therefore, it is valid for a filmmaker not to presuppose meaning in their approach. Furthermore, I discussed my view that making a film without an intended meaning both expands the possibilities for interpretation and democratises the filmic experience. The question remains, however, as to how I realise this approach in practice. In this section, I intend to give insight into this by explaining what I refer to as my 'process-first' approach to filmmaking.

The general term 'process' can be used to refer to the overall act of filmmaking (e.g. 'the filmmaking process') or specific stages within this general act (e.g. the writing process, the recording process, the editing process, etc.). In my practice, however, I use the term 'compositional process' to refer to a set of rules, guidelines or instructions that determine the specifics of how the audio and video tracks are to be made.[83] These rules can apply to any part of filmmaking, from the material gathering stage through the final editing stage. In this way, my compositional processes govern the way that the recorded sounds and images are to be obtained/modified/presented/etc., but, importantly, they do not dictate what said materials need to be.

With this in mind, I now turn to my use of the term 'process-first' to describe a core aspect of my filmmaking methodology. By this, I mean that my approach to filmmaking starts with developing a compositional process, while the sounds and images that will ultimately make up the film remain undetermined until a later stage.[84]

This process-first approach is one of the main ways I push back against the presupposition of meaning in my filmic art. In the second section of Chapter 2, I explained my conceptualisation of audiovisual meaning as something which arises subjectively when a viewer-listener experiences a film's sounds and images simultaneously. As my compositional processes do not dictate what sounds and images to include and only outline how the audio and video tracks will be made in terms of their structure/form, I can compose these processes without needing to presuppose what meaning will ultimately arise in the mind of a viewer-listener when they engage with the film.

I do not view my compositional processes as being 'about' anything, nor do I see them as communicating or representing any ideas, themes, or concepts. Often, they arise from a desire to experiment with a technique, compositional approach, aesthetic, etc. (for example, the process for my film *Dice Roll* stemmed from my desire to explore ways of allowing dice to determine different aspects of a film's audio and visual results). They generally tend to be quite systematic, often consisting of multiple stages with many steps within each stage. In this regard, my processes showcase a range of levels of complexity, from relatively simple rules (e.g. *Untitled Duration, SUPERPOSITION*) to highly intricate series of instructions (e.g. *FRAMERATES, Timelines*).[85]

How ideas for my processes emerge is as much of a mystery as any question of how artistic ideas arise. They seem to stem from a desire to explore different ways of working with audio and visual materials (specifically in terms of how recorded media can be arranged, combined and presented in general) and an

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[83] In this section, my goal is to simply outline my concept of compositional processes in relation to my filmmaking methodology in general. The kinds of rules that make up my processes range from technical instructions to general guidelines, often combining elements of both. I discuss each of my film's compositional processes in their respective commentaries (Chapter 5), with some of the more complex processes included as Appendixes.

[84] My thoughts here parallel John Cage's and my conception of the process-first approach is indebted to his writings on his experimental music practice. However, he did not describe his approach using the term 'process-first'. For examples of Cage's thoughts on this area, see John Cage, "Composition as Process: I. Changes", in *Silence*, 18–34, and John Cage, "Composition", in *Silence*, 57–61.

[85] See specific film commentaries in Chapter 5 for descriptions of these compositional processes.

interest in the different forms audiovisual media can take.[86] To give some general examples, my processes can be inspired by a specific technical idea (e.g. single-frame editing in *FRAMERATES* or the combination of material in *Collision*, *Overlap*, and *Formation*), a general filmic principle (e.g. audiovisual synchronisation in *[sync] I* & *II* or audiovisual abstraction in *AUDIOVISUALS*), or a philosophical line of enquiry (e.g. simultaneity of events in *SUPERPOSITION* or the linear order of time in *Timelines*).

While the compositional processes that these ideas result in may often appear quite technical or formal in nature, they arise spontaneously in much the same way as any other creative inspiration. My processes are an integral part of not only my filmmaking methodology but also of my creative identity as it currently stands. It should also be noted that after the initial inspiring idea, the development of my processes is arguably one of the most challenging stages in my filmmaking practice as I slowly work out the shape the process will take, what the rules are and the aspects of the piece they will dictate, and how to put it into practice. However, I find the challenges presented by this process-first approach to be extremely rewarding, and over the course of my research, I have enjoyed exploring the potential offered by this method of filmmaking.

Before moving on, I will briefly give some context on how I view my process-first methodology within the broader field of experimental film. I was inspired by Scottish experimental animator Norman McLaren's work, such as *Dots* (1940) and *Loops* (1940), two very early examples of sounds being produced by drawing directly onto film stock alongside animated imagery drawn to act in sync with the sounds.[87] McLaren's approach to filmmaking involved highly technical processes that required a significant level of care to execute. I relate to his view that challenging processes can allow a certain kind of artist to tap into a source of intuitive creativity without being based on meaning.[88]

I also see a strong connection between my methodology and the work of experimental filmmakers that can be described as representing different aspects of the Structural film movement, namely Peter Gidal, Kurt Kren, Michel Snow, and Andy Warhol. Their work all showcases an emphasis on process and a general rejection of meaning, albeit in differing ways. Gidal's films feature processes that give attention to the material aspects of analogue film and the process by which said material is gathered (e.g. *Focus* (1971), *Room (Double Take)* (1967)), while much of Kren's early work is based around technical editing patterns and processes (e.g. *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi-Test [2/60 Heads from the Szondi-Test]* (1960), *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst [Trees In Autumn]* (1960)).[89] Snow's films often stem from a process with relatively simple parameters that leads to hypnotic, immersive results (e.g. *Wavelength* (1967), *Back and Forth* (1969)) and Warhol's work represents a minimalist approach to filmmaking that allows his films to slowly take form from predetermined processes often based around extended durations (e.g. *Empire* (1965), *Sleep* (1964)).[90]

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[86] While it is perhaps self-evident, it should be stated that all of my processes essentially arise from the lines of philosophical thinking outlined in the previous chapters: compositional independence and equality, meaninglessness, and unknowable results.

[87] Norman McLaren, *Dots*, film (New York, 1940), https://youtu.be/E3-vsKwQ0Cg; Norman McLaren, *Loops*, film (New York, 1940), https://youtu.be/6JvOqeEtFRY.

[88] Terence Dobson, "'bump... Bup... Bup': Aural Innovation in the Films of Norman McLaren," in *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*, 89–108; Another important artist who explored similar methodological approaches to Dobson is interdisciplinary artist Harry Smith, whose early experiments with filmmaking involved hand-drawing onto film strips and layering film with dyes: Jamie Sexton, "Alchemical Transformations: The Abstract Films of Harry Smith," Senses of Cinema, July 2005, https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2005/experimental-cinema/harry_smith/.

[89] Peter Gidal, *Focus*, film (UK: LUX, 1971); Peter Gidal, *Room (Double Take)*, film (UK: LUX, 1967); Peter Gidal, *Conditions of Illusion*, DVD (Paris: RE:VOIR, 2016); Kurt Kren, *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi-Test [2/60 Heads from the Szondi-Test]*, film (Austria, 1960); Kurt Kren, *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst [Trees In Autumn]*, film (Austria, 1960). https://youtu.be/U6gbfVt_L94; Kurt Kren, *Kurt Kren - Structural Films*, DVD (Österreich: INDEX, 2004).

[90] Michael Snow, *Wavelength*, film (Canada, 1967); Michael Snow, *Back and Forth*, film (Canada, 1969), https://youtu.be/ivryfBTpRxI; Andy Warhol, *Empire*, film (New York: Warhol Films, 1965), https://www.moma.org/collection/works/303039; Andy Warhol, *Sleep*, film (New York: Warhol Films, 1964); Klauss Honnef, *Warhol*, trans. Carole Fahy, rev. ed. (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), 74.

The field of contemporary electronic and digital music is another area where I have encountered artists whose attention to process I relate to in various ways. Two examples of this are sound artists Nick Collins and Ambrose Field. Collin utilises his background in mathematics and programming to explore compositional approaches based on algorithms and digital technologies, while Field engages directly with digital technology which he uses to create much of his material from scratch. While artists such as this do not explicitly describe their approach as being 'process-first', I feel the emphasis they place on method and the process by which the compositions come about is relevant to the present discussion on this aspect of my methodology.[91]

[91] Hugill, *The Digital Musician*, 259-60, 272.

Compositional Processes of Randomisation and Improvisation

In light of my previous discussions on filmic results and my process-first approach to filmmaking, it should be understood that it is crucially important to my practice that my compositional processes produce unknowable filmic results. By unknowable filmic results, I primarily mean that the final audiovisual results are unknowable to me before the sound and image tracks are combined.[92] However, my use of this term also refers to the unknowable nature of my image tracks' visual results and sound tracks' audio results as independent audio/visual pieces of art. In this way, while I generally use the term unknowable filmic results to refer to unknowable audiovisual results, it is important to remember that my visual results and audio results are also unknowable.[93]

To achieve this, I develop compositional processes that ensure many aspects of the filmic results are 1) determined by chance (i.e., by introducing randomisation), and 2) are not planned in advance (i.e., by introducing improvisation).[94] I will now discuss each of these aspects of my compositional processes in turn and give examples as to how they contribute to the production of unknowable filmic results.

I introduce randomisation into my processes by employing what are referred to as 'chance operations' (or 'chance procedures'), a term coined by John Cage to describe techniques that allow compositional outcomes to be determined by random chance.[95] Some examples of the kinds of chance operations I include in my compositional processes range from physical methods, such as tossing coins, rolling dice, and scrambling pieces of paper, to digital ones, such as using various forms of random number generation.[96]

Randomisation most prominently occurs at the editing stage of my filmmaking practice, where my compositional processes outline chance operations to determine how the sound and image tracks are edited.[97]

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[92] It should be noted that when I use the term audiovisual results I am referring to the objective combination of sound- and image-based materials that are being presented simultaneously; I am not referring to the subjective 'audiovisual experience', which emerges in the mind of the viewer-listener and only exists internally.

[93] If the sound and image tracks are made up of unknowable audio and visual results, then the audiovisual results achieved by presenting the sound and image tracks together are, therefore, also unknowable. In these cases, I describe my compositional processes as producing unknowable audiovisual results 'indirectly', as beyond simply pairing the independently made sequences there is no additional stage in the compositional process that determines how the audio and visual results will be combined. While less common, there are several cases in which I see my compositional processes as producing unknowable audiovisual results 'directly'. In these films, the sound-image combinations arises as a direct result of the compositional process, for example when an additional chance operation determines the pairing of audio and visual pieces (e.g., *Collision – Overlap – Formation*), or when one compositional process determines both sound and image tracks simultaneously (e.g., *FRAMERATES, [sync] I & II. AUDIOVISUALS*). However, while this indirect/direct distinction is worth noting in a discussion of my methodology, it should be recognised that as my goal is for my compositional process to produce unknowable audiovisual results then it does not matter whether this occurs indirectly or directly, therefore both are equally valid approaches that are open to me.

[94] Please note that the present discussion is purely focused on my own methodology and I am not suggesting that this is the only way one can go about achieving unknowable results.

[95] Cage, "Experimental Music", in *Silence*, 10; Cage, "Composition as Process: II. Indeterminacy", in *Silence*, 35–40; Lucier, *Music 109*, 9–11.

[96] Chance operations have also been used by artists in the Dada movement, such as Jean Arp who regularly chose cut-up pieces of paper at random for his poetry compositions, a technique I have adapted and employed to determine various aspects of my films: Marc Dachy, *Dada: The Revolt of Art*, trans. Liz Nash (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 30–31; Multimedia Brion Gysin also experimented with cutting pieces of text and rearranging them at random, which inspired writer and visual artist William S. Burroughs to explore these methods through several experimental novels: Ciarán Ryan, "Cut Ups," Brion Gysin, September 26, 2022, https://www.briongysin.com/cut-ups/; Austin Kleon, "The (Surprisingly Long) History of the Cut-up Technique," Austin Kleon, September 18, 2018, https://austinkleon.com/2018/09/18/the-surprisingly-long-history-of-the-cut-up-technique/; For an example of a contemporary visual artist embracing chance in their practice, see: Art21 and Arturo Herrera, "Abstraction, Chance, and Collage," interview, Art21, 2005, https://art21.org/read/arturo-herrera-abstraction-chance-and-collage/;

[97] An exception to this is the compositional process for my film *Dice Roll* which is one case of a chance operation being actively applied during the material gathering stage of the filmmaking process, specifically the video recording, with my approach being to repeatedly roll dice while recording to decide how I should move and orient my camera. For a discussion on how artists can introduce randomness at different stages in their processes and to varying degrees, see: Tyler Hobbs, "Randomness in the Composition of Artwork," TylerHobbs, September 7, 2014, https://www.tylerxhobbs.com/words/randomness-in-the-composition-of-artwork.

For example, aspects of the edit, such as the ordering of materials, the selection of which materials are included, the duration each material is seen or heard, the processing that is applied to the materials, etc., can all be determined by chance operations. Almost all of my films' editing processes are based on some degree of randomisation, and it is arguably because of this more than anything else that I can ensure my filmic results are truly unknowable before being made.[98]

As I have alluded to before, I often refer to my filmmaking process in terms of 2 general stages: the material gathering stage, where sounds and images are recorded, and the editing stage, where the sound and image tracks are assembled and combined to form the final film. My employment of chance operations, as outlined above, is enough to ensure that the final filmic results are unknowable throughout the entire filmmaking process until the editing stage is completed; this in itself satisfies my desire to explore unknowable filmic results. However, I want to go further and have the sounds and images that will make up the film unknowable to me before the material-gathering stage. There are many ways of achieving this, but the method that I am most drawn to is by introducing improvisation into my compositional processes.

One way of doing this is for my compositional process to explicitly direct me to improvise while recording material, with examples being films such as *Untitled Duration* and *SUPERPOSITION*, the processes of which all give directions on how to go about gathering material in an improvisatory way without specifying what the audio/visual subjects should be. Another way is for my compositional processes to not comment on the content of the sounds and images to be recorded, leaving the possibilities wide open and allowing me to treat the recording as a free improvisation, with examples of this approach being *FRAMERATES* and many segments from the *NOVEMBER* project. Finally, another way is for my compositional processes to give guidelines on how to approach recording material that either outlines a series of technical/methodological limitations to improvise around (e.g., *Dice Roll*, *Timelines*, *AUDIOVISUALS*) or outline a specific mindset that I should allow to guide my material gathering process (e.g., *XENOBLAST*, *Nocturnal Synthesis*, *[sync] I* & *II*).[99]

There is regular overlap between these general ways of introducing improvisation as my compositional processes regularly mix elements of each. Ultimately, in almost all of my films, I do not know what specific sounds and images will make up the audio/visual material of a given film until the moment at which I engage in the act of recording. I have found that this approach can lead to a very immersive creative experience for me, as I see myself less akin to a filmmaker choosing sounds and images based on the way I wish to use them and more akin to a musician who explores the capabilities of their instrument (in my case, my camera or sound recording equipment) as they engage with and interact with other musicians (in my case, the audio and visual subjects that I can record).[100]

In light of the above discussion, my compositional process can be understood to embrace both randomisation and improvisation. At first glance, these two methodological approaches may appear at odds with each other, as a process of randomisation seems to remove any sense of control and personal intention from determining the outcome, while a process of improvisation seems to give total control to whoever is improvising to have their in-the-moment decisions shape the outcome. However, I must remind anyone with such concerns that my goal is to explore unknowable filmic results, and randomisation and improvisation are simply two possible ways of practically achieving this goal.

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[98] The only exceptions to this are *Untitled Duration* and *SUPERPOSITION*, which both consist of single take audio and video tracks with no linear editing process to randomise.

[99] Discussions on the improvisatory elements in all the above mentioned film projects are discussed in the respective commentaries found in Chapter 5.

[100] In the following chapter focused on my aesthetics, I will discuss this in more detail, specifically in relation to how I improvise with my camera to explore aesthetics of abstraction.

When considering my compositional processes and the unknowable nature of the filmic results they produce, specifically due to the randomisation inherent in the editing process, an important discussion must be had on the potential for realising more than one version of any of my films.

As I previously stated, most of my films are edited according to chance operations. Therefore, once the material-gathering stage of any film such as this is complete, one could easily repeatedly edit the film using the same editing process and the same materials, and an entirely different version of the film would emerge each time. Furthermore, because these films are not based on any pre-imagined outcome or pre-ascribed meaning, all of these 'possible versions' would be equally valid. It follows from this that because all possible versions are equally valid, there is not one particular possible version that can be said to be essential or necessary. The only way that one possible version could be said to be essential and rise to the level of becoming 'the film' is if only one version of the film is ever realised.

This raises some important questions: Why should I realise only one possible version? I could instead create multiple versions of my films and allow any potential viewer-listener to experience whichever ones they choose. Or why not simply reject the idea that a film such as this needs to exist as one audiovisual sequence? After all, if all possible versions are equally valid, why not create them all and have them collectively be 'the film'? Why should the film exist as one essential version?

Central to my response to these questions is my conception of 'the film' as something that only exists internally in the mind of the viewer-listener as an emergent audiovisual experience. These possible versions under discussion are not possible 'versions' of the film; they are, in fact, possible 'realisations' of the film's process. All that is required for the film to exist, essentially and in its totality, is but one possible realisation. Possible versions of the film do exist, but only as the subjective experiences of each individual viewer-listener. To ask why the film should exist as only one essential version versus a collection of equally valid versions is to misunderstand what the film actually is and the way in which it can be said to exist.[101]

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I have now outlined the methodological approaches, techniques and considerations that lie at the core of my creative practice. Before discussing some important aspects of my filmmaking aesthetics, I feel the need to address a question that I repeatedly grappled with as I continued developing my practice, namely, to what degree my audience needs to be or should be aware of how my films are made.

From my view that all experiences are equally valid, this is true regardless of the level of context the viewer-listener has. A viewer-listener does not need to be aware of how I made my films for the simple reason that no knowledge can fundamentally change the manner in which their experience arises. By this, I mean that a viewer-listener will still produce the film internally through their emergent audiovisual experience regardless of any knowledge of my process or philosophy because this experience is a product of internal sound-image synthesis, which will always occur.

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[101] Another way of thinking about this aspect of my process is to consider an analogy to quantum mechanics, specifically the concept of 'wave function collapse'. In quantum physics, a quantum system is described by a 'wave function' that gives the probability of every possible state the system may be in. This means that while the quantum state cannot be known before it is measured, it allows one to make predictions as to the probability of any potential result being recorded. For example, it is impossible to know an electron's position in an atom before it is measured, but the likelihood of it being found at any given location can be predicted according to equations based on its wave function. Once a measurement is taken and the electron's position becomes known, the wave function no longer describes its position and is therefore said to 'collapse'. I see a connection between this and my use of chance operations in my processes. During the period after I have completed the material gathering stage but before the film is edited, it is as though the film exists in a state of all possible realisations, each of these having the potential to become actually realised. Once the process is followed through to completion, however, the possibilities disappear and only one realisation remains. For brief explanations of the above mentioned concepts of wave function collapse, see: Sean Carroll, *Something Deeply Hidden: Quantum Worlds and the Emergence of Spacetime* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2019), 22–24; Joanne Baker, *50 Quantum Physics Ideas You Really Need to Know* (London: Quercus, 2013), 64–67.

However, while it is true that a viewer-listener with no knowledge of my process/methodology/philosophy will have an equally valid experience to anyone else, at the same time, I believe that if a viewer-listener wishes to gain a deeper understanding of the ideas and approaches underlying my practice, then they have every right to do so, as far as I am concerned.

Furthermore, I see two lines of thought that suggest positive reasons for giving viewer-listeners insight into my practice. Firstly, while all experiences are equally *valid*, this does not mean they are all equal in other aspects, such as enjoyability, immersion, satisfaction, engagement, etc. I believe that when given an insight into how my films are made and the ideas underlying them, this can invite the viewer-listener to engage with the film in a way that is perhaps more open to allowing the experience to play out without overt attempts to interpret any meaning or to work out what the film is trying to say.[102]

Secondly, while it is in no way necessary for a viewer-listener to have any knowledge of a given film's process, I believe having some idea of this can also invite a potentially more engaged or immersive mode of viewing or allow the viewer-listener to feel more connected to the film based on their intellectual understanding of how it was made and why it was made in this way. However, the question of whether it is desirable or better for one's experience to be more engaging, immersive, satisfying, etc., is not for me to say.[103]

Because of this, I do not impose information on how my films are made or the ideas behind my approach to filmmaking onto my audience, but I also do not hide anything from them. My current way of approaching this is to freely offer up as much information regarding my practice whenever it is sought (for example, I have participated in several film festival Q&A panels where I openly discuss how my films are made; in cases where my films are available online, I ensure that context regarding my process can be readily found by anyone who wishes to find out more).

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[102] Again, I must stress that a viewer-listener who does view the film in such a way is having a completely valid experience, because there is no sense in which my films 'should' be experienced as they exist *only as* experience.

[103] See Eldritch Priest's exploration of 'boring' art in *Boring Formless Nonsense: Experimental Music and the Aesthetics of Failure* for an example of how one can put forth a strong argument for the artistic merits of work that is not engaging, immersive, or satisfying; Eldritch Priest, *Boring Formless Nonsense: Experimental Music and the Aesthetics of Failure* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

CHAPTER 4:
Reflections on Aesthetics

Preliminary Remarks:

In this chapter, I will outline several aesthetic aspects of my filmmaking practice that are recurring across my various film projects. By aesthetics, I refer to the general topic of how my films look and sound, both in terms of the kinds of materials I choose to work with and the ways I compose with them in my filmmaking processes. The main focus of this discussion will be on aspects that apply to both the sounds and images in my films, though I will also cover elements that apply to only one or the other. As part of this discussion, I will also give some insight into how this aesthetic is brought about through the various techniques I employ at the stages of process development, material gathering, and editing.

In Chapter 1, 'Critique of Established Filmmaking Practices', I established a 3-part structure that the subsequent chapters followed, with the first parts all relating to the same core idea of audiovisual experience, the second parts to meaning and meaninglessness, and the third parts to pre-imagining results and chance. This chapter also deals with these three core ideas and how they relate to aspects of my filmmaking aesthetic.

However, in the interest of clarity, the order has here been reversed, with the first section, 'Aesthetics of Combination and Growing Materials, ' relating to unknowable results, the second section, 'Aesthetics of Abstraction and Lo-Fi Materials, ' relating to meaninglessness, and the third section 'Aesthetics of Duration in Processes and Materials,' relating to audiovisual independence and equality (see Fig. 4).

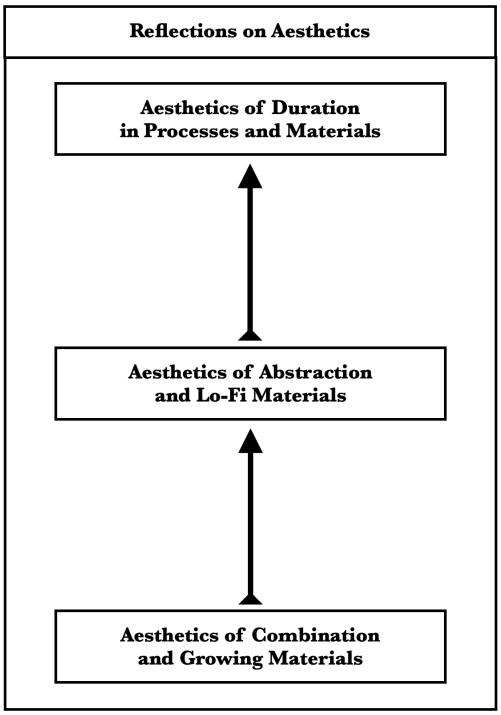


Fig. 4: Illustration of this chapter's structure. The top-down vertical arrangement reflects the order of topics as established by the previous chapters, while the arrows point upward reflect the order in which these segments are presented in the current chapter.

Aesthetics of Combination and Growing Materials

Many of my films' chance-based processes explore the combination of multiple materials that are presented simultaneously (both images combined with other images and sounds combined with other sounds). In video terms, I am referring to the techniques of overlaying or blending multiple recordings; in audio terms, I am referring to the techniques of layering multiple recordings and mixing across the stereo field.[104]

One outcome of these techniques is the degree to which they render the results unknowable in advance of the process being followed through to completion, regardless of the control I have over the act of recording the materials. When recording visual material, for example, what I see while recording is not what will ultimately be seen in the final film once it has been blended with another recording. I also typically employ chance operations in this approach, so I generally do not know which materials will be combined, adding to the unknowability of the filmic results.[105]

When I use these techniques, I consider the results not so much as multiple pieces of material seen or heard at once but more equivalent to a new material that has been able to 'grow' from the combination of sounds or images. One prominent artist who has also expressed a similar line of thinking is British ambient composer Brian Eno, who, when describing his compositional process that can lead to many potential outcomes, said, "It is like designing a seed. You plant it and it grows into something."[106]

I describe the aesthetic result of this approach as tending towards noise, chaos, and abstraction. I am interested in more than just the aesthetic nature of these concepts but also what they represent philosophically. Noise and chaos are deeply aligned with my ideas surrounding randomness and unknowability, as abstraction is with my thoughts on audiovisual meaning and meaninglessness (which I will discuss further below in the following section). I often find myself being drawn to the work of artists that also exist within the sphere of this kind of aesthetic, such as the 'harsh noise wall' of French noise artist Vomir, whose compositions revolve around the core idea of layering many noise recordings to develop a chaotic, richly textured wall of sound.[107]

Some films for which I directly explored this area of my filmmaking aesthetic are *Collision/Overlap/Formation*, three films made simultaneously from processes focused on different ways of layering materials, *Nocturnal Synthesis*, the editing process of which included 25 layers of both audio and visual materials, and the *NOVEMBER* project, in which I experimented with a wide range of approaches to combining materials.

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[104] I am able to explore this aesthetic through these techniques in large part due to the digital technologies and tools available to me. For a discussion focused on modern artists who have embraced digital tools in their experimental filmmaking practices, see: Pedro Ferreira, "Innovative Digital Moving Images: Structural Digital Video And Handmade Digital Cinema ," Hambrecine, September 12, 2013, https://hambrecine.com/2013/09/12/innovative-digital-moving-images-structural-digital-video-and-handmade-digital-cinema/; There are also examples of artists working today who mix tools of the past and present, such as audiovisual artist and philosopher Kristóf János Bodnár who regularly explores both analogue and digital sound synthesis; Péter and Bodnár, "Versions of Me."

[105] A contemporary artist relevant to this discussion is Rhayne Vermette, who also explores methods of combining materials in different configurations through work such as *Tricks are for Kiddo* (2012); Chloe Lizotte, "Rhayne Vermette," Metrograph, October 4, 2023, https://metrograph.com/rhayne-vermette/; Jim Shedden and AGOinsider, "Seven experimental filmmakers to know," Art Gallery of Ontario, March 23, 2022, https://ago.ca/agoinsider/seven-experimental-filmmakers-know.

[106] Brian Eno, "Interview With Hans Ulrich Obrist", in *Chance: Documents Of Contemporary Art*, ed. Margaret Iversen (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010), 140–41.

[107] Russell Williams, "Anti-Musicality: An Interview With Romain Perrot Of VOMIR," The Quietus, August 20, 2014, https://thequietus.com/articles/16050-romain-perrot-vomir-interview-harsh-noise-wall.

Aesthetics of Abstraction and Lo-Fi Materials

Several of my films exhibit what I describe as an aesthetic of abstraction, which I have explored primarily through my choice and processing of audio and visual materials. I use the term abstract to describe sounds and images that are not immediately identifiable/recognisable/knowable in terms of their subject/source/object/etc., or sounds and images that are distinguishable but have been significantly altered from their natural state. By abstract materials, I refer both to materials that are by their own nature abstract and not easily identifiable and materials where their audio/visual content is rendered abstract due to the way it was recorded/processed.

My concept of abstract materials is contrasted by the concept of concrete materials, the term I use to describe recorded sounds/images that are readily identifiable and without having undergone any overt manipulation. As such, my filmic materials can broadly be thought of in terms of this abstract/concrete divide.

However, there is no strict line between the two, and instead, I view it as a moving scale in terms of degrees of abstraction. I am most interested in exploring the space between the entirely abstract and fully concrete, a core aspect of my filmmaking aesthetic. I have been particularly fascinated by how perceptual experience (of sounds, images, and both taken together) is impacted and shaped by materials of differing degrees of abstraction. By this, I am referring to films made from a range of materials spanning the abstract/concrete divide and films where the materials can be largely broken up into the categories of 'abstract' and 'concrete'.[108]

This aspect of my filmmaking aesthetic is closely related to my philosophical thoughts on the possibilities of meaninglessness. Abstract sounds and images invite the viewer-listener to engage more interpretatively, as there is nothing concrete to latch onto. Additionally, as I do not presuppose any meaning when I include abstract materials in my film, every perceiver has the freedom to interpret the material in a way that is unique and personal to them, with the abstract nature of the materials only adding to the possibilities for vastly different meanings to arise in the viewer-listeners' minds.

Many of my films that showcase this aspect of my aesthetic simultaneously exhibit what I would describe as a 'lo-fi' aesthetic. I have always been drawn to what may be referred to as lo-fi (low fidelity) sounds and images, such as grainy, shaky, or blurry video recordings and distorted, unclear audio recordings. I believe that these lo-fi materials have the potential to lead to rich and fascinating artistic results despite what they apparently lack in terms of quality on a surface level. I see the nature of a lo-fi aesthetic as allowing the materials to open up in terms of their potential for interpretation; for example, a video recorded with a very high level of grain can lead the viewer to be unable to identify what the images are of, inviting them to experience the material on a more abstract, interpretative level.[109]

In terms of my visual material, one of my main techniques is to treat my camera in a similar way to how I would treat a musical instrument so that the process of recording video becomes less a case of my using a piece of equipment to record material and more of an interplay between me, the camera, and the

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[108] *FRAMERATES* and the *NOVEMBER* project are examples of the former; *AUDIOVISUALS* and *XENOBLAST* are examples of the latter.

[109] I have been able to explore this lo-fi aesthetic due to the tools and technologies I choose to work with as much as the methods. Another artist who has explored a lo-fi aesthetic by exploring the possibilities offered by various modern tools, such as various electronic musical instruments, is Sophy Smith, see: Hugill, *The Digital Musician*, 263-64.

subject being recorded.[110] I often treat this recording stage as an act of improvisation, where my process has laid out general rules and limitations for approaching gathering material, but I am given the freedom to make in-the-moment decisions based on how I interact with my camera and the recording space. Related to this is the fact that most of my video processing occurs during the recording process. In most cases, I achieve both my abstract and lo-fi video aesthetics during the recording process by using in-camera video effects and recording techniques instead of applying visual effects to my materials in the editing stage.[111]

In terms of audio, I regularly work with various sound synthesisers that are naturally able to produce highly abstract sounds and allow me to delve into the sonic world of noise fully. I also enjoy taking field recordings using lo-fi recording techniques and equipment, such as using the built-in microphones of audio recording devices or covering microphones with different materials to muffle and decrease the clarity of the audio. Additionally, I enjoy manipulating field recordings using various audio processing tools. On several occasions, I have used musical instruments that I play as sound sources for film projects, such as drums and electric guitar, but primarily electric bass, where one of my preferred techniques is to use various pedals and recording setups to explore extreme distortion.

Some films I made that directly explored this area of my filmmaking aesthetic are *AUDIOVISUALS*, where I directly engaged with my idea of the abstract/concrete divide, *XENOBLAST*, a film made from materials that range from almost entirely abstract through to almost entirely concrete, and *Timelines*, the recording processes of which included a series of complex instructions that governed the different ways and degree to which each piece of material was rendered abstract.

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[110] I have chosen to work with the Sony A7 digital mirrorless camera for almost all of my films in this portfolio, and I have developed a strong creative connection to this camera that I now feel is more akin to an instrument than a tool for recording. While I do not see my films as being 'about' the technology that allowed them to come into being in any way, nor would I typically use the term 'digital' when describing my filmmaking as this is not one of my main philosophical inspirations, my embrace of digital recording technologies is nevertheless an important underlying aspect of my methodology and aesthetic. For an in-depth discussion on digital art and a survey of artists whose work exemplifies this embrace of modern technologies, see: Camille C. Baker and Kate Sicchio, *Intersecting Art and Technology in Practice: Techne/Technique/Technology* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

[111] The main exception to this is the abstract results achieved by layering/blending visual material, as discussed in the above section. *XENOBLAST* and *AUDOVISUALS* are my only films where the visual effects were predominately applied in the editing stage. My use of digital technology, specifically my Sony A7 camera, has allowed me to explore these methodologies and resulting aesthetics. Japanese experimental filmmaker Kazuhiro Goshima has also spoken about his use of a DSLR camera in his work and the important ways in which this adds both interesting possibilities and limitations to his practice, something that I relate to. For a discussion on the work of Goshima and other experimental filmmakers whose work is to an even greater degree defined by the technologies they employ, see: Kiejziewicz, "The Technologies of Experimental Japanese Filmmakers in the Digital Era."

Aesthetics of Duration in Processes and Materials

I tend to begin each of my films' compositional processes by deciding what the overall duration will be before then deciding how to fill this duration for both the sound and image tracks. For example, I may break it up into smaller 'durational blocks' of equal or varying lengths or leave it as one unbroken sequence. From there, I can start composing the editing process, working out how to arrange these durational blocks that are, at this stage, devoid of any audio/visual material.[112]

The techniques I employ to determine and arrange durations in my processes range from relatively simple to highly complex. Some compositional processes simply determine the durational blocks' linear ordering, such as *Dice Roll, [sync] I* & *II,* and the overall structuring of *November 2020 – 2021 – 2022.* Other films, such as *FRAMERATES*, *AUDIOVISUALS*, *Timelines* and *Nocturnal Synthesis*, are made from far more intricate processes that often feature many steps that determine what the durations will be and how they are arranged, combined, ordered, etc.

At this stage, I am able to determine the amount of recorded audio and visual material needed for the editing process to be realised, both in terms of how many recordings are required and their respective durations. In other words, instead of recording material freely and then later choosing which segments to use in the editing process, my compositional processes determine in advance how long each recording should be, with these durations being chosen based on the way they will be arranged in the main editing stage of the process.[113]

This aspect of my processes also varies in complexity. Sometimes, I decide that all materials to be recorded will be the same length, and any durational changes will occur at the editing stage (*AUDIOVISUALS*, *XENOBLAST,* and *Nocturnal Synthesis* are examples of this). Other times, I decide on a series of recording durations and refrain from making any durational changes at the editing stage, presenting all of the recorded materials in full (*[sync] I* & *II*, *Timelines*, and many of the *NOVEMBER* film segments are examples of this). There are also cases where the sound and image tracks consist of only one audio and video recording, respectively, with the processes outlining how to fill this singular duration during the recording process, either with specific technical instructions or with more general guidelines for an improvisatory approach (*Overlap*, *Untitled Duration,* and *SUPERPOSITION* are examples of these single-recording processes).

This compositional approach also impacts the nature of the material I tend to engage with. By this, I mean that when I am at the stage of deciding what the audio and visual material for a given film will be, my decisions must be made within the framework of the predetermined durations required by the film's compositional process. While this could be seen to be a limitation or restriction, I see it as an effective way of inviting me to directly consider the durational nature of my materials, by which I mean the ways in which the sounds and images I record evolve (or don't evolve) over their recorded duration.

This has led me to work with various aesthetically distinct sounds and images. For example, the materials in some of my films exhibit a more minimalistic, meditative aesthetic that emphasises slow changes of form and the passage of time, only revealing their depth over longer durations (such as the long, drone-based sounds and static, grainy images of films like *Overlap*, *Untitled Duration*, and *Timelines*) and others that embrace a more maximalist, chaotic aesthetic of constant motion, change, and development (such as dense, noise-based sounds and images defined by the motion of either the subject or the camera that can be heard and seen in films like *FRAMERATES*, *Collision*, and *Nocturnal Synthesis*).

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[112] I compare this to building a structure with an assortment of colourless building blocks which will ultimately be filled with colour at the end of the building process.

[113] In a sense, this is like selecting a number of 'durational buckets' that need to be filled with sounds and/or images at the material gathering stage.

My conceptualisation of duration plays a foundational role in all of my films' processes, but there are several examples in which it is more directly evident. The process for *FRAMERATES* grew out of a desire to experiment with rhythmic variations of single-frame editing to explore the audiovisual experience of very short durations. *Untitled Duration* stemmed from a process that sought to directly engage with the idea of filmic art being understood as duration, with an aesthetic that embodied slowness, stasis, and textural depth. *Timelines* was made from a multi-layered process that evolved from my thoughts on the perception of time as a series of linear durations and my desire to subvert this notion through a non-linear editing process.

This focus on duration as a primary area of creative interest is a natural result of the various philosophical and methodological ideas discussed in the preceding chapters, particularly my desire for my film to exhibit compositional audiovisual relationships of independence and equality. In light of this, along with the other filmmaking practices I have rejected (i.e., the presupposition of meaning and the pre-imagining of results), duration is revealed to be a core element that remains to be explored. By this, I mean that because I am not selecting or editing sounds and images based on any consideration of the other kind of media (nor on any consideration of a presupposed meaning or a desired filmic outcome), I can treat duration as a primary element of both my materials and compositional processes.

* * *

Now that an overview of my practice has been presented, I will discuss each film project in my portfolio.

CHAPTER 5:
Portfolio of Accompanying Commentaries

Preliminary Remarks:

This final chapter brings together my film project commentaries. They give an overview of each film, with the discussions spanning the films' philosophical underpinnings, the processes by which they were made and my reasoning behind them, and the various inspirations and influences I received from the fields of film, music, art, and philosophy.[114] In this way, my goal is not only to give insight into my creative process but also to situate each film in the context of the broader field of experimental film.

While I approached each film project as a standalone piece of work, there was a sense that each project naturally led into the next, with the research topics explored and the filmmaking methods employed often sparking new project ideas. As such, I consider the chronology of my projects to be an essential factor in the development of my practice, which is why I have chosen to present these commentaries in the order in which the films were made.[115]

Finally, all of the philosophical, methodological, and aesthetic concepts in the previous four chapters have relevance to every film project under discussion. However, I have largely refrained from re-discussing any of these ideas and instead aimed to focus on topics that specifically apply to the film under discussion.[116]

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[114] Several films featured processes that were quite complex and technical in nature. In the interest of clarity, for these film processes, I have included elements such as full process descriptions, technical breakdowns, or relevant figures and tables as appendixes.

[115] With the technical exception of the *NOVEMBER* project, which spanned 3 years of my research.

[116] I make this point here to account for the relative lack of direct discussions of my philosophical stances in many of my commentaries. For example, when making *Dice Roll* I was particularly focused on exploring the intersection between randomisation and improvisation in a compositional process and the unknowable nature of the filmic results produced by such a process, but I will not make this a focus of my commentary as I previously discussed my thoughts on this topic and how it relates to my practice overall in Chapter 3, 'Compositional Processes of Randomisation and Improvisation'. Examples such as this could be drawn from any of my film projects.

1. NOVEMBER
2020 – 2021 – 2022

***NOVEMBER*: Introduction**

NOVEMBER is a three-part experimental film project that can be viewed as three standalone 15-minute films (*November 2020, November 2021, November 2022*) or presented as one 45-minute film (*NOVEMBER 2020 – 2021 – 2022*).[117] Each part comprises thirty video segments and four audio segments, all made as individual pieces throughout the month of November in 2020, 2021, and 2022. All video segments are 30 seconds long, with one made every day of the month, while all audio segments are 225 seconds long, with one made every week of the month.[118] At the end of the month, the audio and video segments were assembled in a randomised order.

***NOVEMBER*: Process & Methodology**

All three *November* films were made by following this same approach, which is summarised by the rules below:

***November 2020 / 2021/ 2022*:**

1. **Every Day:** Develop a new process/composition for a 30-second visual piece, film the material required and edit within the day.
2. **Every Week:** Develop a new process/composition for a 225-second audio piece, record the material required and mix within the week.
3. **End of Month:** Assemble the 30 video segments and 4 audio segments in a randomised order based on the results of a chance operation (Using pieces of paper to represent the audio and video segments, papers are drawn at random to determine the editing order).

Note: Approach each piece as an independent, standalone work (as opposed to treating each piece as a follow-up to the previous one or making connections between them).

On reflection, I found the making of *NOVEMBER* to be a profoundly immersive creative experience. The demanding nature of the rules required me to work intensively throughout the month-long overarching process, continuously going through the motions of an entire creative process daily and weekly. I found this to be incredibly rewarding, both creatively and philosophically, as it helped me tap into a mode of spontaneous creativity that led me to pursue a wide range of ideas I otherwise would not have thought of.

I approach my films methodically, with my compositional processes often emerging slowly. Here, however, I wanted to explore the possibilities of pushing myself to take an entirely new approach. While attempting to adhere to the *NOVEMBER* process, I was continually presented with limitations and restrictions (e.g., the time restriction of having to make an original video segment from scratch every day or the limitations of having to work with whatever audio or video materials I had access to at the time). However, I found that I could turn these limitations and restrictions into opportunities for experimentation, with the result being that while making each *NOVEMBER* film, I explored a wide range of new approaches to audio

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[117] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video files: 01A_NOVEMBER 2020.mov, 01B_NOVEMBER 2021.mov, 01C_NOVEMBER 2022.mov, 01D_NOVEMBER 2020–2021–2022.mov

[118] On the difference in approach to audio and video segments: it was important for me to remain disciplined throughout the process and not allow the video and audio pieces I was working on to influence any others, as I wanted the segments to have all been conceived and created independently. If they shared the same process, i.e. if I had to make both a 30-second video piece and a 30-second audio piece every day, I felt that this would greatly impinge on my ability to keep the pieces separate. When developing my ideas for how to approach the project, I was also thinking practically about the demands of making audio and video pieces and the relationship between the duration of the pieces and how much time should be allowed to make them. This reflection ultimately led to my decision to make 30 x 30-second video pieces daily and 4 x 225-second audio pieces weekly.

and video material gathering, processing, and composition across the many audio and visual pieces that make up *NOVEMBER*.

For several reasons, I have opted not to discuss the specific compositional processes of the individual audio and visual pieces that make up the *November* films. First, the large number of pieces would make for a very long discussion on the technicalities of how they were made, and I do not believe such a lengthy detour would benefit the reader at this stage. Second, many of the process approaches and techniques used across these pieces are also used in much more developed and complex ways in other film projects that I will explain in detail (either in the main text of the commentaries or included as appendices). Finally, the insight into how I make my films gained from the previous chapters should allow the reader to engage with the *November* films because the diversity of the audio and visual pieces showcase most, if not all, of the ideas discussed up until this point being applied in practice.

In my personal experience as a viewer-listener, I consider *NOVEMBER* to be a film defined by its outward-facing experimentalism, and I believe focusing on the technical details of the individual processes would miss the point of what I feel this project means to me and my creative practice. I think of *NOVEMBER* as a kind of audiovisual stream of consciousness, continually presenting new aesthetics, structures, and approaches; a film where, like small waves breaking on the shore before quickly receding into the ocean, each audio and visual piece brings forth new ideas and experiences that fade into the next, just as quickly as they came.

NOVEMBER: Context & The Field of Experimental Film

When situating *NOVEMBER* within the field of experimental filmmaking, worth discussing are several examples of experimental films that all showcase approaches of filmmakers taking multiple segments that existed as standalone short films and combining them into longer format pieces.

In his authoritative recounting of the history of American experimental film *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943–2000*, P. Adams Sitney discusses several 'serial films' by several prominent filmmakers on the American experimental film scene, ranging from the more narrative multi-part works such as Bruce Baillie's *Quick Billy* (1971) to the more abstract works of Stan Brakhage such as *Scenes from Under Childhood* (1967–70) and, the focus of an extensive analysis from Sitney, *Dog Star Man* (1961–64).[119] *Dog Star Man* exists as five 'parts,' each of which are short films in their own right that, when viewed together in sequence, make up the *Dog Star Man* film serial. Brakhage subsequently produced an extended version titled *The Art of Vision* (1965), in which the five parts are repeatedly shown in differently edited variations.[120]

Between 1964 and 1969, Brakhage produced 25 films that made up the 'cycle' of silent films under the title 'Songs'. These films ranged from 3–69 minutes and were linked by the shared process of being made entirely on 8mm film.[121] While the separate parts of *Dog Star Man* did all work together to form a narrative, albeit a highly abstract one, Brakhage's 'Songs' were not connected narratively in this way and were more focused on the approach to process, which is why I view my *NOVEMBER* project as being somewhat closer philosophically to 'Songs' than to Brakhage's other multi-part works.

During the same years that Brakhage was working on *Songs*, another prominent American-based filmmaker, writer and poet, Jonas Mekas, was filming what would become *Walden (Diaries, Notes and Sketches)* (1969). *Walden* is a serial film in its own right, a collection of recordings taken over five years and edited

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[119] P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000*, 3rd ed (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 189–203, 226–30; Bruce Baillie, *Quick Billy*, film (USA, 1971), in *Visionary Film*, 226–30; Stan Brakhage, *Scenes From Under Childhood*, film (USA, 1967–70), https://youtu.be/qfXHoQUzaGg, https://youtu.be/A4SLJ2cGudI; Stan Brakhage, *Dog Star Man*, film (USA, 1961–64), https://youtu.be/lb5Ko_sTwlc.

[120] Stan Brakhage, *The Art of Vision*, film (USA, 1965), in *Visionary Film*, 203–06.

[121] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 209–25.

together into a form of audiovisual diary compilation. It is also the first in his film series *Diaries, Notes and Sketches,* comprising ten such 'diary films'.[122]

While my intentions for the *NOVEMBER* project were not for the films to function as an audiovisual diary, there is a certain aspect of the work that does reflect this, albeit in a less literal way than Mekas' serial/diary films. Mekas' film diaries used recorded audio and visuals to document snapshots of time, whereas my *NOVEMBER* project does not document anything besides itself being a documentation of the process having been carried out. Ultimately, the films that make up the *NOVEMBER* project are not 'about' the month of November in 2020, 2021, and 2022, but the fact that they were made throughout this month alone is nonetheless important to the film.

More recently, two members of the Experimental Film Society, Cork-based filmmaker Maximilian Le Cain and society founder Rouzbeh Rashidi, have both produced long-form works made from previously existing shorts. Le Cain has assembled several serial films/extended features made by combining various short films, found footage pieces and unfinished sequences collected over many years.[123] *Scorpion's Stone* (2018) and *Moon Tiger Movie (1997–2019)* (2019), both with running times of over 6 hours, are examples of Le Cain's practice of repurposing films and audiovisual material and combining previously unconnected materials to produce a new audiovisual whole.[124] Rashidi has taken a similar approach with *Homo Sapiens Project (200)* (2020), an 8-hour edit of short films he had made between the years 2000 and 2010 that is also part of his broader serial film project under the 'Homo Sapiens' title.[125] There are, of course, notable differences between my *NOVEMBER* project and these 'film serials,' the most notable perhaps being that pre-existing films have been repurposed in these serial examples. Nonetheless, I still see a point of philosophical connection between these works and my own, as they all explore the idea of independent short films existing as standalone pieces while also being combined to form a larger film.

Another reason I was drawn to this concept comes from my background in music-making. I have always been particularly interested in how individual tracks come together to form an album and how each track functions both as a piece in its own right and as part of a larger whole. I wanted to apply this idea to *NOVEMBER* so that each of the three films exist both as standalone pieces and as parts of the larger sequence.[126]

NOVEMBER: Context & The Field of Experimental Music

Another source of inspiration for my approach came from the field of musical composition, where scores are routinely interpreted by different performers many times. Similarly, I followed the same set of instructions for each *November* film, each year resulting in an entirely different filmic realisation. A crucial difference here between my work and a traditional score is that my instructions for the *November* films only outline the overall shape of the film and the discipline to be followed, while the actual audio and video content is left entirely open and undetermined.

My thoughts on how a score or set of instructions can lead to a nearly unlimited number of interpretations and results were primarily informed by various compositions of American experimental music. Examples of this include John Cage's chance-based scores that would change each performance based on elements of randomness, such as *Cartridge Music* (1960), in which the sounds performers make and when

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[122] Jonas Mekas, *Walden (Diaries, Notes and Sketches)*, film (USA 1969), in *Visionary Film*, 339–42, 424, 452.

[123] Maximilian Le Cain, "Film Serials", maximilianlecain.com, 2021, https://www.maximilianlecain.com/film-serials.

[124] Maximilian Le Cain, *Scorpion's Stone*, film (Ireland, 2018), http://www.experimentalfilmsociety.com/film/scorpions-stone/; Maximilian Le Cain, *Moon Tiger Movie*, film (Ireland, 2019), http://www.experimentalfilmsociety.com/moontigermovie/

[125] Rouzbeh Rashidi, *Homo Sapiens Project (200)*, film (Iran / Ireland, 2000–2020), http://rouzbehrashidi.com/hsp/homo-sapiens-project-200-2000-2020/.

[126] This concept is also at play within each *November* film, with each instalment consisting of many audio and video segments that can be compared to tracks presented together to form an album.

they make them are determined by tracing a dotted line on paper and following instructions based on the various random shapes that cross their paths.[127]

John Cage also often made it a point of his practice to set up situations where increased levels of complexity in the process resulted in the final pieces being impossible to reproduce without achieving drastically different results. His approach to *Fontana Mix* (1958) is an example of this, with Cage devising a complex process that involved splicing thousands of pieces of magnetic tape according to a randomised 'score' of layered sheets of transparent paper that produced a graph of dots and lines, the spacing of which dictated the final order of the recorded sounds.[128] I see an interesting parallel between Cage's approach and mine, with the overarching process for the *November* films being straightforward while allowing the individual segments to be highly intricate, ensuring no two realisations could ever be the same.

Alvin Lucier's work, such as *I Am Sitting in a Room* (1970), showcases another approach in which a straightforward process (in this instance of a voice being recorded into a room and repeatedly played back and re-recorded) leads to unique and unforeseeable results depending on factors outside of the artist's control (in this example while Lucier could choose which room to record in, how that specific room would alter the frequencies of the recorded sounds and ultimately shape the sound of the piece was unknowable beforehand).[129]

The graphic scores of Earle Brown, whose images could be interpreted in almost limitless ways by performers using his scores to guide their improvisations, were also instrumental in broadening my concept of what a score can be, with his score/piece *December 1952* serving as my first exposure to this approach to scoring.[130] While the *NOVEMBER* project is not directly analogous to a score being performed in different settings by different musicians, the central idea of one set of instructions forming the basis for more than one piece of art that could then be re-explored multiple times was something I felt was rich in potential when applied to my film practice.

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[127] John Cage, "Cartridge Music," track 4 on *John Cage: Early Electronic and Tape Music*, Sub Rosa SR361, 2014, CD, https://youtu.be/kkEhaA-G-FA; Lucier, *Music 109*, 56–61.

[128] Alvin Lucier, *Music 109: Notes On Experimental Music* (Middeltown: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), 8–9; "John Cage Complete Works | Fontana Mix", Johncage.org, accessed 4 January 2022, https://johncage.org/pp/John-Cage-Work-Detail.cfm?work_ID=79.

[129] Alvin Lucier, *I Am Sitting in a Room*, CD (Middeltown: Lovely Music, Ltd., 1981), https://youtu.be/fAxHlLK3Oyk; Lucier, *Music 109*, 88–91.

[130] Earle Brown, "On December 1952", *American Music* 26, no. 1 (2008): 1–12, doi:10.2307/40071686; Richard Hoadley, *December Variations (On A Theme By Earle Brown)*, pdf (Anglia Ruskin University, 2014), https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/77283476.pdf.

2. FRAMERATES

FRAMERATES: Introduction

FRAMERATES (08:50) is a series of 6 'mini-films' presented together.[131] These were made from the same pool of audio and visual material, with the process of each mini-film being a variation on a core process idea. I wanted to experiment with the single frame as a durational element and see how audio and visual material are changed and shaped when experienced in such short, rapid bursts. I also wanted to explore the possibilities presented by overlaying recordings to create new materials and how small changes to the number of frames seen or heard would affect how a viewer-listener experiences rhythm.

FRAMERATES: Process & Methodology

To give a brief overview of how FRAMERATES was made, parts 1 through 5 are 1 minute long and consist of audio and visual material lasting 1, 3, or 5 frames at a time. The 6th part stands out from the others as the material here is seen and heard for durations of 1, 3, and 5 seconds instead of frames and lasts 3 minutes instead of 1.

All segments were made from the same fifty-five video and thirty-five audio recordings, all of which were 1-minute long. Every part consists of four layers of material (two overlapping video layers and two overlapping audio layers), so two sounds and two images are always heard and seen. The compositional process was facilitated through an original Max/MSP patch, which generated text-based editing instructions that allowed for multiple levels of randomisation between sounds and visuals. I then used these instructions to edit the films manually (see Appendix A for a description of the processes behind *FRAMERATES*' 6 mini-films).

For the material gathering stage, I took an improvisatory approach and did not impose rules on the filming or recording besides the duration needing to be 1-minute for all material. I also wanted the material to change over the course of the minute, so I did not film any static shots or record any sounds or environments that were too uniform. This was to add more unpredictability into the process, as I would have no way of knowing which individual frames would end up being seen or heard and having the material itself constantly changing would lead to more unpredictability.

The audio recordings were a mix of field recordings taken in different environments and improvised recordings of various instruments such as electric bass and modular synthesiser. Shots ranged from camera improvisations in which I experimented with in-camera settings while recording to handheld shots taken while walking through a location so that the visuals would change over the course of the minute.

FRAMRATES: Context & The Field of Experimental Film

During my research for this project, I was inspired by several filmmakers who have made efforts to explore the potential of single-frame editing. Throughout the history of experimental filmmaking, there have been several notable examples of films made using the flicker effect by cutting single frames of film (often referred to as 'flicker films').[132] The concept of using the single frame as a structural element of experimental filmmaking first appeared in the work of Austrian filmmakers Peter Kubelka and Kurt Kren, such as *Adebar* (1957), *Schewchater* (1598), *Arnulf Rainer* (1960), and *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst [Trees In Autumn]* (1960).[133] The

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[131] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 02_FRAMERATES.mov

[132] P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 288.

[133] Peter Kubelka, *Adebar,* film (Austria, 1957). https://youtu.be/1S0aoQQxzwk; Peter Kubelka, *Schwechater*, film (Austria, 1958). https://youtu.be/YEaSnvDBBtY; Peter Kubelka, *Arnulf Rainer*, film (Austria, 1960). https://youtu.be/Uj-_WhYf-Wg; Kurt Kren, *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst [Trees In Autumn]*, film (Austria, 1960). https://youtu.be/U6gbfVt_L94.

technique was further explored in the USA by Tony Conrad and Paul Sharits in works such as *The Flicker* (1966) and *N:O:T:H:I:N:G* (1964), and was described by P. Adams Sitney as one of the "four characteristics of the structural film."[134]

It is worth highlighting the fact that apart from the example of *Arnulf Rainer*, the early 'flicker films' were only focused on experimenting with single-frame cutting of the visuals and not audio. Because of this, I felt there was still more exploration to be done using the technique of 'the flicker', and I saw an opportunity to expand on the tradition with a focus not only on the visual flicker but on its sonic counterpart as well.

Peter Kubelka's first three films, *Adebar, Schewchater,* and *Arnulf Rainer*, are all examples not only of single frame editing but also demonstrations of Kubelka's film theory that "there is no movement in cinema,' and that 'every frame is a still picture."[135] All of these featured complex editing structures based on predetermined rules and single-frame cuts. While the first two films, *Adebar* and *Schewchater*, featured abstract shots of figures and objects, *Arnulf Rainer* is composed entirely of black and white frames and a soundtrack of white noise and silence.[136] As the screen flickers between black and white, the audio track also 'flickers' between silence and sound, and while appearing in synch at times, ultimately, both tracks run independently in parallel. I was drawn to Kubelka's ideas around the single frame in the context of moving images and his appreciation for the equal importance of sound in film.

The Flicker by Tony Conrad is another important experimental film relevant to my work here. The film features a visual track of alternating black and white frames, the rate of change slowly modulating throughout its 30-minute runtime, accompanied by a uniform synthesised soundtrack.[137] While similar in principle to *Arnulf Rainer*, the far longer duration and drone-like soundtrack make for an altogether different experience, and while these two factors are also in contrast to my *FRAMERATES* project, I see a link between my work and *The Flicker* for its exploration of rhythm through very subtle changes in apparent speed.

Another American filmmaker to experiment with single-frame editing is Paul Sharits, whose film *N:O:T:H:I:N:G* primarily features single frames of solid colours flashing rapidly.[138] Sharits had previously begun to experiment with flickering, single-frame films alongside other artists who, at the time, were involved in the Fluxus movement. Films included in the 'FluxFilm Anthology' such as *Sears Catalogue 1–3*, *Unrolling Event*, and *Word Movie*, are all examples of his early explorations of the single visual frame, though again, it is worth noting that he did not apply the same principles or approach to his use of sound.[139]

Finally, the early structural film work of Austrian filmmaker Kurt Kren was also a source of inspiration while researching for this project.[140] I was particularly drawn to his short film *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst [Trees In Autumn]*, perhaps the first-ever example of structural filmmaking according to Peter Gidal.[141] The film consists of shots of trees, ranging in lengths between 1 and 8 frames and based on a predetermined editing process, coupled with a soundtrack Kren produced by spontaneously drawing on the film's sound strip with a pen "without the intention of producing any kind of synchronicity."[142] While many of Kren's films

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[134] Tony Conrad, *The Flicker*, film (USA, 1966). https://youtu.be/rVxNGUTsdJY; Paul Sharits, *N:O:T:H:I:N:G*, film (USA, 1964); Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 348.

[135] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 361.

[136] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 284, 288, 361.

[137] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 361.

[138] Paul Sharits, *N:O:T:H:I:N:G*, film (USA, 1964). https://archive.org/details/PaulSharitsMandalaFilmsNOTHING1968.

[139] George Maciunas, *Fluxfilm Anthology*, DVD (France: Re:Voir, 2010); Paul Sharits, *Sears Catalogue 1–3*, film (USA, 1965). https://dai.ly/xp268; Paul Sharits, *Unrolling Event*, film (USA, 1965). https://youtu.be/qNtqXgKTD5M; Paul Sharits, *Word Movie*, film (USA, 1966). https://youtu.be/U7gExqNaAMo.

[140] Kurt Kren, *Kurt Kren - Structural Films*, DVD (INDEX, 2004).

[141] Peter Gidal, Materialist Film (London: Routledge, 1989), 6–7.

[142] Hans Scheugl, "Die Filme, Eine Kommentierte Filmografie", in *Ex Underground. Kurt Kren, Seine Filme* (Vienna: PVS-Verlag, 1996), 159–91.

were made using very short bursts of frames, he never explored sound beyond his early experiments in *1/57 Versuch mit synthetischem Ton (Test) [1/57 Experiment with Synthetic Sound (Test)]* and the aforementioned *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst,* as his other works made in this style are silent.[143]

Another notable difference between my own aesthetic and Kren's is that in Kren's flicker films, the visual material all share common subjects. For instance, *3/60 Bäume Im Herbst*is made up of similar shots of tree branches filmed from below, in *37/78 Tree Again* every shot focuses on the same group of trees, and *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi-Test [2/60 Heads from the Szondi-Test]* showcases close-up shots of faces exclusively.[144] I wanted the material in *FRAMERATES* to be far less structured and more chaotic, both individually and taken together as a collection.[145]

[143] Kurt Kren, *1/57 Versuch mit synthetischem Ton (Test) [1/57 Experiment with Synethetic Sound (Test)]*, film (Austria, 1957). https://youtu.be/5QHA6ZpQ76c.

[144] Kurt Kren, *37/78 Tree Again,* film (Austria, 1978). https://youtu.be/RK8ixQ2OpL8; Kurt Kren, *2/60 48 Köpfe aus dem Szondi-Test [2/60 Heads from the Szondi-Test],* film (Austria, 1960).

[145] For a recent essay discussing prominent 'flicker films' in the history of experimental film, see: Martin Moolhuijsen, "Seeing Time through Rhythm: An Audiovisual Study of Flicker Films," Sonic Scope, October 27, 2021, https://www.sonicscope.org/pub/o2mep5wx/release/2.

3. COLLISION – OVERLAP – FORMATION

Collision – Overlap – Formation: Introduction

Collision, *Overlap*, and *Formation* are three short films, 2 minutes 30 seconds each, made from three audio and three video pieces that were made independently and randomly paired.[146] While I approached these pieces separately, they were all based on exploring the concept of combining materials to allow new materials to take form or 'grow'. By this, I mean primarily regarding the combination of images with other images and sounds with other sounds in the individual pieces, though also the combination of sounds and images in the final audiovisual films.

The reshaping of the material was caused primarily by the materials themselves (the methods and processes I employed concerning the specific films will be discussed below). In a discussion on art installations, Allan Kaprow, known for his performance art and 'assemblages', examined works containing organic materials that change over time. His description of what this approach brings about, while not referring to film or audiovisual art, is very much in line with my thinking: "Here the materials as subject matter function also as quasi creators and the line between categories blurs."[147]

Collision – Overlap – Formation: Process & Methodology

Across the six pieces, I experimented with different methods of combining materials in ways that would allow the sounds and images to reshape each other. For example, the visual tracks of *Formation* and *Overlap* both involved overlaying two layers of imagery, while *Collision* features a combination of five image tracks that occupy different areas within the frame. I experimented with arranging multiple audio recordings across the stereo field with the audio tracks heard in *Overlap* and *Collision*. In the *Formation* audio piece, my process centred on alternating between two recordings based on a pattern structure.

Once I had completed the six pieces, I composed a chance operation to randomly determine how the audio and visual tracks would be paired. There was a potential for six different sets (outlined in Table 2 below). My method involved writing out the six 'Potential Sets' on six small pieces of paper and dropping them to the ground. Any pieces of paper that fell with the writing facing up were removed. I repeated the process until only one set remained (the result of the process was 'Potential Set 6', as seen below in Table 2).

Potential Set 1:	1 – A	2 – B	3 – C
Potential Set 2:	1 – A	2 – C	3 – B
Potential Set 3:	1 – B	2 – A	3 – C
Potential Set 4:	1 – B	2 – C	3 – A
Potential Set 5:	1 – C	2 – A	3 – B
Potential Set 6:	1 – C	2 – B	3 – A

Table 2: The 6 potential sets of paired audio and visual pieces. The audio pieces are represented by the numbers 1, 2 and 3, the visual pieces by A, B and C.

While I am happy to employ digital programmes such as Max/MSP for the ability to conduct complex randomisations quickly and on virtually any scale, I wanted the chance operation behind the audiovisual pairing to be physical. There is a rich history of artists developing chance operations to employ in their work, with prominent discussions on the topic including both George Brecht's and Anna Dezeuze's

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[146] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video files: 03A_COLLISION.mov, 03B_OVERLAP.mov, 03C_FORMATION.mov

[147] Allan Kaprow, "Assemblage, Environments and Happenings", in *Chance*, 55.

descriptions of various methods utilised by artists to explore chance and randomness, as well as John Cage's seminal writings on the ways chance can be introduced into the composition of experimental music.[148] Both aesthetically and philosophically, I am drawn to this idea of the artist playing a central role in the randomisation process through the employment of physical chance operations.

***Collision*: Audio & Video Pieces**

The audio piece combines two improvisations I recorded with an 'Error Tron', an experimental mono synthesiser made by Error Instruments.[149] The two improvisations were both 12 minutes and 30 seconds long, and my process involved cutting up the recordings and mixing them across the stereo field. I prepared five differently panned audio tracks: hard-left, middle-left, centred, middle-right, and hard-right. The two recordings were both divided into five equal segments, 2 minutes and 30 seconds each. The first segments were placed on the hard left track, the second segments on the middle left, the third on the centre, etc. Finally, segments 1, 3, and 5 of recording two were removed, and segments 2 and 4 of recording one were removed. This resulted in a mix of the two 12-and-a-half minute improvisations condensed down to 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

A crucial factor in this piece is that while recording the improvisation, I was unaware which sections would end up being heard. I also had no way of anticipating what would be heard in the final mix at any specific moment. This lack of control led me to focus more intently on performing with the instrument, letting go of a desire to shape a particular outcome and accepting that the result would be unknown until the recordings were mixed. Also worth noting is the fact that I was relatively unfamiliar with the Error Tron at the time of recording and still discovering its capabilities. Exploring new instruments through improvisation is an approach I have taken several times with music I release as Don't Think, specifically the *Noise Machine* (2018) and *Noise Mixer* (2020) albums.[150]

The visual piece is an exploration of thirty zooming shots, 4–6 seconds in length, playing simultaneously in each of the four quadrants of the screen with a 5th track layered on top. The process is based on four visual editing tracks, each only showing one-quarter of the frame. Each of these four tracks includes all clips in different randomised orders. Every shot is a slow zoom-in, the durations of which were pre-determined (4, 5, and 6 seconds, ten shots of each) to allow for subtle rhythmic variation and development. Another track plays in full screen, overlaid on top, also with the thirty shots in a randomised order. This layer was broken into three sections, each featuring a different type of blending that changes how the images in the combined tracks interact. The order of the three blending modes was also randomly determined. I created a Max/MSP patch for all random number generation.

***Overlap*: Audio & Video Pieces**

The audio piece is made up of 4 recordings of drones, heard in four different configurations of three. I recorded four drones for 2 minutes and 30 seconds each. These were drones that I hear daily and typically do not actively listen to or ignore: a space heater, a kitchen extractor fan, a refrigerator, and an oven fan. After recording, I randomly assigned the labels A, B, C, and D to the recordings. There are three audio tracks: panned left, centre/stereo, and panned right. Each drone is heard three times, once on each track, and all four possible combinations of three are heard. The order of the combinations and the position in the stereo field is pre-determined according to the table below (Table 3). Each of the four 'sections' lasts 37.5 seconds. There is a 12.5-second (1/3 of 37.5) crossfade between sections.

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[148] George Brecht, "Chance Imagery", in *Chance*, 40–42; Anna Dezeuze, "Origins Of The Fluxus Score: From Indeterminacy To 'Do-It-Yourself' Artwork", in *Chance*, 76; Cage, "Experimental Music", in *Silence*, 10–11.

[149] Paul Tas, e*rror tron M v4*, video, 2021, https://youtu.be/s2-bN_ny6DU.

[150] Don't Think, *Noise Machine*, online (Cork, 2018), https://dont-think.bandcamp.com/album/noise-machine; Don't Think, *Noise Mixer*, online (Cork, 2020), https://dont-think.bandcamp.com/album/noise-mixer.

I trace my interest in composing with everyday sounds back to works of Fluxus art, such as George Brecht's *Drip Music* (1959), Alison Knowles' *Proposition* (1962), and Yoko Ono's *Toilet Piece/Unknown* (1971).[151] While my approach and intentions differ from these artists' and setting aside for the moment the performative aspects of their pieces, the idea of shifting one's attention to things we regularly overlook or ignore is something I find fascinating to explore.[152]

Section 1:	Left A	Centre B	Right C
Section 2:	Left B	Centre C	Right D
Section 3:	Left C	Centre D	Right A
Section 4:	Left D	Centre A	Right B

Table 3: Table of combinations in predetermined order detailing which drone is heard when and where in the stereo field. For example, Section 1 contains drone A panned hard-left, drone B on panned to the centre, and drone C panned hard-right.

The visual track features two versions of the same shot playing simultaneously, one reversed, and the other flipped upside-down. The process revolved around a pre-determined structure that involved timing when to zoom in and out while filming to make the 2-minute 30-second shot symmetrical. The shot is broken up into five sections. The first 30 seconds are static. The next 30 seconds is a very slow zoom-in. The following 30 seconds stay zoomed in. The next 30 seconds is a very slow zoom-out to the original frame. The final 30 seconds are static. This structure ensured the framing and zooming would appear in sync whether the shot was played backwards or forward. While the shooting structure was fixed, I had no control over any action within the frame while filming.

Formation: Audio & Video Pieces

With this piece, I wanted to experiment with applying a technique common in visual editing to audio recordings: cutting abruptly between materials. While cutting from one shot to another is a common practice in visual editing, this is far less the case in film sound editing, which prioritises immersion and continuity. The work of French New Wave filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard has helped inform my thinking on this topic. His work is largely notable due to his handling of sound, and I admire Godard's technique of editing audio recordings with abrupt cuts as if they were visual shots, going against traditional filmmaking sensibilities.[153]

The visual piece is the result of layering shots taken using an in-camera setting that reduces the images to the extreme contrast of black and white. My interest in exploring this kind of imagery is influenced by the work of Russian painter and theorist Kazimir Malevich (1878–1935) and the Suprematism art movement he founded. Malevich defines Suprematism as a "nonobjective" art based on "the supremacy of pure feeling in creative art" and shuns art depicting objects or representations of reality.[154] While I would not

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[151] George Brecht, "Drip Music," in *The Fluxus Performance Workbook*, ed. Ken Friedman, Owen Ken Friedman, Owen Smith, and Lauren Sawchyn, 21 (London: Performance Research e-Publications, 2002), https://www.deluxxe.com/beat/fluxusworkbook.pdf; Alison Knowles, "Proposition," in *The Fluxus Performance Workbook*, 69; Yoko Ono, *Toilet Piece/Unknown* (London: Apple, 1971), https://youtu.be/NiO1pevvUds.

[152] A contemporary sound artist whose work is also relevant to this discussion is Toshiya Tsunoda, whose soundscape compositions have made him a prominent name in the current landscape of artists composing with field recordings. While the materials of Tsunoda's compositions may differ from the 'everyday' sounds of the above Fluxus pieces, regularly being captured using modern recording technologies that can detect sounds not otherwise audible to the human ear, I see a strong point of connection between his approach and the Fluxus spirit of turning ones attention to what is typically ignored or unnoticed; Will Montgomery, "Quiet Storms: Toshiya Tsunoda," The Wire Magazine, January 2011, https://www.thewire.co.uk/in-writing/essays/quiet-storms_toshiya-tsunoda; Joanna Demers, *Listening Through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 115, 124-31.

[153] Alyssa Beaton, *New Wave Godard, Sound Practice And Conceptions Of Noise* (Montreal, Quebec: Concordia University, 2015), 47–48, https://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/980350/7/Beaton_MA_F2015.pdf.

[154] Kazimir Malevich, "Suprematism", in *Modern Artists on Art*, ed. Robert L. Herbert (New York: Dover Publications, 1999), 117, https://monoskop.org/images/5/58/Malevich_Kazimir_1927_2000_Suprematism.pdf.

go so far as to classify *Formation's* visual piece as a work of Suprematism, I feel a connection between its aesthetic and that of Malevich's early Suprematist paintings *Black Square* (1915) and *White on White* (1918), which depict a black square on a white canvas and a tilted white square on an off-white canvas, respectively.[155]

[155] Kazimir Malevich, *Black Square*, Oil on linen (Moscow: Tretyakov Gallery, 1915); Kazimir Malevich, *White On White*, Oil on canvas (New York City: Museum of Modern Art, 1918).

4. DICE ROLL

Dice Roll: Introduction

Dice Roll (05:22) is a film made up of separate audio and visual pieces playing simultaneously.[156] The idea for both pieces grew from the desire to explore compositional processes where rolling dice played a central role. Apart from this, the two pieces are entirely unrelated regarding the content and concepts explored.

I had several motivations behind my decision to explore the use of dice in my processes. The number of possible outcomes of a dice roll being just six limited the kinds of chance operations I could compose my pieces with. I was also drawn to the use of dice due to the role this allows me to play in the chance operations. While I could have built a Max/MSP patch to easily handle the random generation of numbers between 1 and 6, I wanted my own actions to play a part in the determination so that the outcomes were not the result of pure mathematical randomness but instead brought about through the physical act of me rolling the dice. This nature of dice rolling and its classification as a random process has remained an area of interest for researchers, with recent studies analysing the randomness (or pseudo-randomness) that rolling dice produces.[157]

There is also a history of artists using dice in their compositions, dating back to W. A. Mozart (1756–1791) experimenting with dice-based 'games' as a compositional approach, up to more recent examples such as Edward Chilvers' use of 4, 6,12 and 20 sided dice to determine the elements of his piano compositions.[158] It seems that the use of dice in filmmaking has remained under-explored, and I wanted to take the opportunity to change this and showcase the potential these kinds of techniques have for film process composition.

Dice Roll: Process & Methodology (Video Piece)

The visual piece in *Dice Roll* explores tripod-mounted camera movement, shot in four equal parts presenting different aesthetic approaches. The piece can also be described as executing a real-time movement composition for a tripod and zoom lens. The driving motivation behind the piece was my desire to explore camera movement as a phenomenon utterly detached from meaning, in a rejection of traditional uses such as giving a point of view to the audience or supporting narrative development. In narrative filmmaking, a pan or tilt is seen as a device that should always be motivated by the needs of the plot. A parallel can be drawn in documentary films, as zooms are often used to let the viewer know when something important should be focused on.

The way the camera is supported and the treatment of movement is a more complex issue regarding experimental filmmakers, with Nicky Hamlyn exploring the topic through the works of Stan Brakhage, Peter Gidal, and Andy Warhol, among others.[159] Still, even in experimental and avant-garde works, the camera's movement is most often motivated by the subject being recorded and the imagery being captured; as a

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[156] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 04_DICE ROLL.mov

[157] Jan Nagler and Peter Richter, "How Random Is Dice Tossing?," *Physical Review E* 78, no. 3 (September 2008), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23315692_How_random_is_dice_tossing; M. Kapitaniak et al., "The Three-Dimensional Dynamics of the Die Throw," *Chaos: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Nonlinear Science* 22, no. 4 (December 2012), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/234029725_The_three-dimensional_dynamics_of_the_die_throw.

[158] Zsofia Ruttkay, "Composing Mozart Variations with Dice," *Teaching Statistics* 19, no. 1 (March 1997): 18–19, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1467-9639.1997.tb00313.x; Maddy Shaw Roberts, "Meet the man using dice – yes, dice – to compose his music", Classic FM, 2020, https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/instruments/piano/edward-chilvers-using-dice-compose-music/.

[159] Nicky Hamlyn, *Film Art Phenomena* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 89–101

viewer, we see what the filmmaker wanted us to see when they moved the camera in the given way. But what if camera movement was instead simply camera movement? What if instead of panning to the left to reveal something offscreen, panning to the left was just an expression of the camera panning to the left for no reason other than to pan to the left? And how would different methods of filming impact and affect such an exploration of camera movement? These are the main questions I wanted to explore through this piece.

The video process involved first determining the four shooting locations, using two dice to pick from a list of twelve. All potential locations were based around my house and were all spaces I regularly walk through, most often without stopping to look around. The shooting involved setting up my tripod and camera in the chosen locations and repeatedly rolling two dice while filming, the first to determine the type of camera movement to perform (panning left /right, tilting up/down, zooming in/out) and the second to suggest how far to follow this movement (e.g., rolling a one would signify only a small degree of panning, whereas a six would result in a full rotation). In the first segment, I repeated the process twice and overlaid the shots to showcase how the two different sets of movements affected the final images. The second was shot at dusk using a slow shutter speed to blur and distort the movement. The third was shot out of focus using in-camera settings to reduce the imagery to abstract colours. The final segment is the result of a single take, with no change being made to the visuals.

I decided to leave the determination of the filming locations to chance because the camera movement was the main focus, not where or what the camera would be looking at. My list of twelve potential locations offered a range of areas with different visual identities. Instead of picking them based on how I felt they would look when experienced in sequence, I was happy to accept whatever combination occurred. It was also important to me that the filming process felt spontaneous and almost performative, and I wanted to avoid picturing the final result before filming it. For this reason, I determined each location, one at a time, right before filming, only deciding on the following location after the previous had been shot.

I approached the filming itself in a very different way from previous works. Instead of having a predetermined shooting structure or improvising freely, I used the dice to turn the process into a sort of 'shooting score' that I would perform. As I was rolling dice while filming (shaking the dice in a small bowl held in one hand), the movement score was being composed in real-time. The complexity of the shooting also made me focus on the execution of the process and less so on what images I was filming.

This reminded me of an approach taken by filmmaker and animator Norman McLaren, whose pioneering work entailed drawing his soundtracks onto film stock by hand. In Terence Dobson's investigation into McLaren's work, a point is made on how McLaren would devise intentionally demanding processes: "By diverting his attention through working on a technical challenge, McLaren believed that his conscious input into his film work could be minimised, thus giving pre-eminence to his subconscious processes."[160] This, however, clearly describes a key difference between my reasoning and McLaren's, as I employed this tactic to give pre-eminence to the technical process of shooting itself instead of tapping into my subconscious.

While all four segments of the piece follow the same 'shooting score', they each explore a different aesthetic approach that brings different aspects of the camera's movement into light. Based on my experience working with my camera, I decided on these four approaches and the knowledge that in-camera settings and how the material is edited can drastically impact how the resulting movement is perceived. Experimenting with degrees of abstractness was a major consideration. I wanted to allow the viewer to experience how the abstract/non-abstract images would affect their subconscious perception of movement.

Dice Roll: **Context & The Field of Experimental Film (Video Piece)**

Inspiration for this exploration of camera movement primarily comes from the structural film work of artists such as Michael Snow, Peter Gidal, and Ernie Gehr. Snow's seminal work *Wavelength* (1967) is

[160] Dobson, "'bump... bup... bup': Aural Innovation in the Films of Norman McLaren," 90.

structured entirely around a slow zoom throughout its feature-length duration, while *Back and Forth* (1969) and *La Région Centrale* (1971) both showcase tripod moment as the main compositional device.[161] While overall, I do not see an abundance of parallels between Snow's aesthetic and philosophical leanings and my own, these films are prime examples of how the filming process itself can serve as the motivation behind a work and their impact on the field of experimental filmmaking cannot be understated.[162]

Many of Gidal's films, such as *Clouds* (1969), *Focus* (1971), and *Upside Down Feature* (1969–73), draw attention to the filming apparatus through an emphasis on camera movement.[163] His philosophy and theorisation of structural/materialist filmmaking drive this focus, describing his film work as "a record (not a representation, not a reproduction) of its own making."[164] Gehr's *Serene Velocity* (1970) is structured entirely around a constant and rapidly changing zoom lens, as P. Adams Sitney describes, "Simultaneously moving both closer and farther away with his lens position he achieves the uncanny effect of obliterating the (assumed) position of the camera at the starting point."[165]

VERTIGO RUSH (2007) by Johann Lurf is another work exploring camera movement that I found influential. Made by repeatedly dollying the camera forwards and backwards while the lens zooms in and out in syncopation with the movement, the repetition and speed lead to the recorded imagery becoming almost entirely abstract over the 19-minute duration.[166] Interestingly, while the film features a soundtrack comprised of a droning, steadily rising pure tone, a technical error occurred when I viewed this film at a screening of Lurf's work at the 2018 IndieCork Film Festival, which resulted in the film playing silently. It was only after the screening that Lurf addressed the audience and informed us that *VERTIGO RUSH* was supposed to have an immersive soundtrack, and so my experience of this film as a visual-only piece not only informed my thinking on the topic of camera movement as a compositional device but also played a role in shaping my thinking on the independence/dependence of sound and visual tracks.

Dice Roll: **Process & Methodology (Audio Piece)**

The audio piece is a drone metal composition consisting of electric bass, guitar, and drum machine. Core elements of the compositional process were determined through dice rolls, with improvisation also playing a central role.

Drone metal, or doom-drone, is a style of music that I find fascinating as both a listener and a performer, and in the past, I have released several EPs inspired by it as Don't Think.[167] While I have previously written riffs, worked with pre-determined structures, and used improvisation as various compositional methods, for this piece, I wanted to experiment with the direct combination of improvised material and material composed using chance operations. The concept of taking an improvisation, something constantly evolving and changing at each moment, and turning it into a fixed entity through recording and then allowing it to evolve and change again by mixing it with other material was something I

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[161] Michael Snow, *Wavelength*, film (Canada, 1967); Michael Snow, *Back and Forth*, film (Canada, 1969), https://youtu.be/ivryfBTpRxI; Michael Snow, *La Région Centrale*, film (Canada, 1971).

[162] Hamlyn, *Film Art Phenomena*, 121–23; P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943–2000*, 3rd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 352–55; A. L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video: From the Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice*, 2nd edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 79–82.

[163] Peter Gidal, *Clouds*, film (UK: LUX, 1969); Peter Gidal, *Focus*, film (UK: LUX, 1971); Peter Gidal, *Upside Down Feature*, film (UK: LUX, 1972); Peter Gidal, *Condition Of Illusion*, DVD (Paris: RE:VOIR, 2016).

[164] A.L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 89–90.

[165] Ernie Gehr, *Serene Velocity*, film (New York, 1970); Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 401.

[166] Johann Lurf, *VERTIGO RUSH*, film (Austria, 2007); "Johann Lurf - VERTIGO RUSH", Johannlurf.Net, https://www.johannlurf.net/vertigorush/#bild.

[167] Louis Pattison, "Heavy, Heavier, Heaviest: A Beginner's Guide To Doom-Drone", BOILER ROOM, 2015, https://boilerroom.tv/heavy-heavier-heaviest-a-beginners-guide-to-doom-drone/; Don't Think, *EP no.1*, online (Cork, 2018), https://dont-think.bandcamp.com/album/ep-no-1; Don't Think, *EP no.2*, online (Cork, 2020), https://dont-think.bandcamp.com/album/ep-no-2.

wanted to explore, and I felt that the immersive sound of drone metal would be a particularly interesting vessel to carry this out.

The first stage of the audio process involved recording an electric bass drone metal improvisation. This was performed freely, with the only limitation imposed being that I would stay on frets 1–6 on the low E string (which I down-tuned to D). For the electric guitar, I repeatedly rolled dice until the numbers 1 through 6 had all appeared in a random order, ignoring repeat numbers. This order was then applied to the guitar, with the numbers representing on which fret the sustained drone chords would be played, each lasting 1/6th of the overall duration. Finally, the drum machine composition involved several steps. Six patterns were composed, each six beats long, with the placement of the snare and bass drum being determined by dice rolls (several other rules were in place so that the same pattern could not be produced twice, and the snare/drum could not fall on the same beat more than once).

Dice were also used to determine which patterns would include hi-hat, ride cymbal, or floor tom, as well as determining the tempo (choosing between 30, 60, and 90bpm). Finally, all the bass, guitar and drum machine tracks were mixed to produce the final composition.

The fact the instruments were each performed and recorded separately, their execution not relying on the other tracks, is of central importance to this process. Taken individually, each instrument track functions on its own, with the result being either determined by an external process or my improvisation but not driven by the other tracks. As such, the experiment of this piece lies in the resulting interaction between bass, guitar and drum machine in the final combination.

While planning the piece, I faced the decision of whether to record the improvisation or the chance-based tracks first. I considered the effect of recording the guitar and drum machine first and then recording my bass while listening back, allowing my improvisation to be shaped and guided by reacting to the other instruments. I ultimately decided I was more interested in seeing how the improvisation would grow into something new and how the disparate tracks would come together when each was recorded on its own. This led me to record the improvisation first without knowing how it would play in the piece.

Dice Roll: **Context & The Field of Experimental Music (Audio Piece)**

Some of the primary inspirations for this piece are the work of drone-metal bands Sunn O))) and Earth, doom metal acts 40 Watt Sun and Burning Witch, and the early noise work of Michael Gira's experimental group Swans.[168] One of the things that draws me to these artists and this style of music is the use of heavy distortion as the primary method for developing complex timbres and immersive sound worlds.

Drone artists such as Thomas Köner, La Monte Young, and Tim Hecker have also informed my thinking and approach to drone compositions. I have always been intrigued by how drone music affects our perception of duration and progression, particularly the heavily distorted riff-focused metal variety. I enjoy how, through repetition, emphasis on subtle variation and a sense of stasis, drone music invites an entirely different listening experience. As Joanna Demers puts it when discussing drone music (in particular, its heavily distorted, metal-inspired sub-genre) and its impact on the listener, "These elements last too long and are too loud, and they disrupt the sense that music functions as a language by calling attention to the physical aspects that music usually asks us to ignore."[169]

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[168] Sunn O))), *ØØ Void*, CD (Hollywood: Hydra Head, 2000), https://sunn.bandcamp.com/album/void; Earth, *Earth 2: Special Low Frequency Version*, CD (Seattle: Sub Pop Records, 1993), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOUbZJbkHNw; 40 Watt Sun, *Wider Than The Sky*, online (London, 2016), https://40wattsun.bandcamp.com/album/wider-than-the-sky; Burning Witch, *Crippled Lucifer*, CD (Los Angeles: Southern Lord, 2008), https://burningwitchsl.bandcamp.com/album/crippled-lucifer; Swans, *Cop*, CD (New York City: K.422, 1984), https://swans.bandcamp.com/album/cop-young-god.

[169] Demers, *Listening Through the Noise*, 91.

5. [SYNC] I – [SYNC] II

[sync] I – [sync] II: Introduction

[sync] I (03:22) and *[sync] II* (06:22) are two experimental films exploring sound/image synchronisation while maintaining equality and independence between the films' sounds and images.[170] Both films are made from the same materials: forty shots of varying lengths filmed with synchronised sound, all taken on the same day in the morning and night.

[sync] I features two audiovisual tracks playing simultaneously, both of which either play only sound or only visuals at any time. This results not only in overlapping sounds and images but also in sounds without images and images without sound. *[sync] II* comprises two different orderings of the materials, with audio and visual tracks swapped. The order of sounds and images in both films was randomly determined (see Appendix B for a description of the processes behind *[sync] I* and *[sync] II*).

In allowing the possibility of only having audio or only visuals play in *[sync] I*, I wanted to show how sound and images can function independently within the context of the film; and while the audiovisual material was recorded in sync, which one could argue suggests an inherent dependence, I say that by not presenting the material in this way any perceived dependence is subverted as the sounds and images are given the chance to exist without needing the other.

[sync] I – [sync] II: Philosophy & Audiovisual Synchronisation

Philosophically, the main thing I wanted to explore with this project was the phenomenon of audiovisual synchronisation and what it means for sounds and moving images to be 'in' or 'out of' sync while also questioning if it even matters in this experimental film context. In *[sync] I* & *[sync] II*, everything seen and heard was recorded as synchronised audiovisual material. However, the material is not presented this way and the final audiovisual combination results in an entirely different type of synchronisation.

So, what is audiovisual sync? Is it found in the moments when the sounds and images appear to 'fit', the so-called 'points of synchronisation' (a concept thoroughly interrogated by Michel Chion throughout *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* and by Peter Kubelka in lectures on his theory of experimental film)?[171] What about the moments when sounds and images happening together seem to contrast and don't fit? Or is it simply when any audio and visual material is experienced simultaneously? Do the sounds and images have to start at the same time for them to be in sync? What happens to audiovisual sync when either sound or image is removed? Can images be in sync with silence, or can sound be in sync with a blank screen? Does audiovisual sync occur within the film, between the screen and the speakers, or in the mind of the audience?

In traditional narrative film, sounds and images running in parallel on separate tracks work together to form an illusionistic audiovisual experience based on the formation of meaning; everything is always 'in sync'. In *[sync] I* & *[sync] II*, the audio and visual material can be better described as occupying the same track, overlapping and leaving space in equal measure, existing both because of and independently of the other. Is everything here in sync, or is nothing in sync? And how constructive is it to think about experimental audiovisual interaction in these terms?

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[170] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video files: 05A_[SYNC] I.mov, 05B_[SYNC] II.mov, 05C_[SYNC] I & II.mov

[171] Chion, *Audio-Vision*; Lucas, *Peter Kubelka on metaphoric cinema*, video, 2018, https://youtu.be/9vBUMBM3Phw.

[sync] I – [sync] II: Context & The Field of Experimental Film

One inspiration for my desire to explore the question of audiovisual sync in an experimental film context is the short film *The Girl Chewing Gum* (1976) by John Smith.[172] Most of the film is presented as one long take, the camera panning around a street corner and zooming in on different activities and elements in the surroundings. The voice of the director, offscreen, at first seems to be directing the action, but we eventually realise that the soundtrack is actually a narration recorded afterwards, resulting in a surreal experience that invites the viewer-listener to question the way in which they experience audiovisual, filmic material.[173]

While Smith's film is overall dissimilar to *[sync] I* and *[sync] II* in terms of aesthetics, style, and approach, it too raises questions about what it means for sounds and images to be 'in sync,' as well as drawing attention to how visuals are prioritised and given higher status in traditional film and often even in experimental film. Another difference between my and Smith's films is that Smith poses these questions in a way that encourages the audience to muse directly on this audiovisual relationship, whereas in my films, the questions raised are not so much looking to be answered but simply experienced. Inspired by Smith's vision and his take on the audiovisual relationship, I wanted to contribute to this area of experimental filmmaking, which focuses on these questions, an area I feel is grossly under-explored in the broader context of experimental film.[174]

Other notable examples of filmmakers who have experimented with concepts of synchronisation in the audiovisual relationship are Mike Dunford with *Synch Sound* (1974), William Raban with *Breath* (1974), and Colin Crockatt with a series of films in which he appears on screen as a sound recordist, such as *Video Tape with Bicycle Sound* (2001) and *The Sound Recordist Walks Away, Alone: The End* (2001).[175] These films are excellent examples of how the question of sync sound was being thought about in experimental films of the time while also being a reminder that very few artists in the field have explored this compared to other trends. Nicky Hamlyn's chapter 'Sound, Sync, Performance' in *Film Art Phenomena* highlights works such as these while acknowledging that relatively little has been done to expand on the formative ideas expressed by these filmmakers.[176]

Audiovisual sync in experimental film is also a neglected area in writing on experimental film and filmmakers. There are exceptions to this, such as *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film* by Holly Rogers and Jeremy Barham and Nicky Hamlyn's aforementioned chapter 'Sound, Sync, Performance', which all directly address these questions and the filmmakers who have explored them.[177] Another notable mention is Michel Chion's *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, and while it is undoubtedly one of the most in-depth explorations of filmic audiovisual sync, Chion's focus is mainly on traditional narrative film and only briefly touches on films outside the mainstream.[178] Meanwhile, seminal works that survey the field of experimental film, such as P. Adams Sitney's aforementioned *Visionary Film* and A.L. Rees's *A History of Experimental Film and Video*, while

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[172] John Smith, *The Girl Chewing Gum*, film (UK, 1976), https://youtu.be/57hJn-nkKSA.

[173] For a detailed analysis of this and other works by Smith, see Andy Birtwistle, "Meaning and Musicality: Sound-Image Relations in the Films of John Smith," in *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*, ed. Holly Rogers and Jeremy Barham (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 167–83.

[174] A notable exception is aforementioned audiovisual artist and researcher Louise Harris, who in her book *Composing Audiovisually* lays out her view that the audiovisual relationship deserves far more attention from both practitioners and theorists alike and makes explicit reference to her desire to explore "balance and cohesion between sound and video" in her audiovisual art; Harris, *Composing Audiovisually*, 68.

[175] Mike Dunford, *Synch Sound*, film (UK: LUX, 1974); William Raban, *Breath*, film (UK: LUX, 1974); Colin Crockatt, *Video Tape with Bicycle Sound*, film (London, 2001); Colin Crockatt, *The Sound Recordist Walks Away, Alone: The End*, film (London, 2001).

[176] Nicky Hamlyn, "Sound, Sync, Performance," in *Film Art Phenomena* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 167–82.

[177] Rogers and Barham, *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*; Hamlyn, "Sound, Sync, Performance."

[178] Chion, *Audio-Vision*.

otherwise comprehensive, feature only brief mentions of sound in general, even then usually referencing music choices and rarely touching on audiovisual sync.[179]

[179] Sitney, *Visionary Film*; Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*.

6. XENOBLAST

XENOBLAST: Introduction

XENOBLAST (05:46) is a film featuring sounds and images recorded by experimental filmmaker Maximilian Le Cain and me.[180] The project involved us both gathering audio and video material, which I then combined through a process encompassing both improvised and randomised editing. Max's role in the project was that of material contributor, while I was responsible for the concept, creative direction, process composition, and editing. Max was given direction through my accompanying text score, and the finished film is made up of a 50/50 split between his and my material (see Appendix C for a description of *XENOBLAST's* process and Appendix D for the 'Film Text Score' and accompanying 'Notes on Creative Approach').

It was vital to me that *XENOBLAST* showcased a new way of gathering audio/visual material that would add to the film's strength and open up new possibilities for my filmmaking practice. In previous pieces, I implemented chance operations in the edit, ensuring the films' final forms remained unknown. However, with *XENOBLAST*, I wanted to see if a similar phenomenon could occur at the material-gathering stage. I had previously begun to explore this idea with the randomised shooting method composed for *Dice Roll*. Still, I knew I could take this further by working with audio and video recorded by somebody else.

From the outset, Max was the clear choice for my collaborative partner. I greatly admire his films and the work produced by the production company he is heavily involved in, 'Experimental Film Society'. One of my first encounters with Max's work, as well as the idea of a collaborative film, was *Self Decapitation* (2017), a collaboration between Max and EFS founder Rouzbeh Rashidi in which both filmmakers created separate films that were joined to form a two-part experimental feature.[181]

This also served as my introduction to the idea of a collaborative experimental film, and it has since been a goal of mine to explore the possibilities of filmic collaboration. As well as embracing the opportunity to work with a prominent figure in the experimental filmmaking field, such as Max, I also wanted to collaborate with him as a fellow Cork-based artist. I feel a strong connection to my home county, and I believe that forging artistic relationships such as this could play an important role in my overall practice.

Additionally, I had highly positive experiences in my previous collaborative works with musicians, such as *Forestscape* (2019) with Longleash Trio and *Transitional Repetition* (2019) with Glen Whitehead.[182] Both of these had a positive impact on how I viewed the audiovisual relationship and guided improvisation. I felt that the chance to work with a film-based artist would benefit my practice, not only for this specific project but also for future works.

XENOBLAST: Context & Collaborative Art

While making *XENOBLAST*, I was inspired by a range of ideas and works. I was particularly drawn to examples of collaborative works in which the artists involved did not know exactly what the others were contributing. This concept appealed to me as it turns the collaboration into an experiment, with the outcome unknown to the participants. I find working in this way to be both creatively rewarding and philosophically engaging.

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[180] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
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Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 06_XENOBLAST.mov

[181] Maximilian Le Cain and Rouzbeh Rashidi, *Self Decapitation*, film (Ireland: Experimental Film Society, 2017), https://vimeo.com/ondemand/selfdecapitation.

[182] Arran Tenzin Bradstock, *Forestscape*, film (Cork: 2019), https://youtu.be/mhUk8Ngfd_M; Arran Tenzin Bradstock, *Transitional Repetition*, film (Cork: 2019), https://youtu.be/GXC9pkeUW2w.

A classic example of this kind of approach is 'the exquisite corpse', a Surrealist drawing game in which participants would all contribute to a shared drawing, the paper repeatedly folded to conceal the additions until the final revelation.[183] This idea has since been adapted to writing, music, and film. To give two examples: In the 1940s, several composers, including John Cage, explored the 'exquisite corpse' approach, the results arranged by Robert Hughes into the piece known as *Party Pieces ("Sonorous and Exquisite Corpses")*, while more recently, filmmaker Sapphire Goss enlisted 23 artists to contribute to *Interior: an Exquisite Corpse film* (2020) based on the Surrealist approach.[184]

The crucial difference separating my work here from any 'exquisite corpse' piece is that in the aforementioned pieces, the contributors were all building upon a glimpse of what was previously contributed; while the bigger picture remained unknown, the artists knew where their part fit into the piece, with each addition influencing the next. This is philosophically very distinct from *XENOBLAST*, where Max and I worked entirely separately, with an external process finally combining our material.

Another example can be found in so-called 'telepathic' works. These are most often live performances based on the idea of collaborators performing in separate, unconnected spaces simultaneously.[185] A recent example of this being explored is *The Telepathic Lockdown Tapes* by Cork-based experimental music/sound art duo The Quiet Club (Mick O'Shea & Danny McCarthy).[186] Throughout 2020, when The Quiet Club could not perform together in a shared space during the COVID-19 restrictions, they began recording separate, independent improvisations. They arranged these sessions at the same time on set days so that they would be performing in sync with each other, only separated by distance and unable to hear or see what the other was doing. The recordings were ultimately combined and released as an album, supported by a live event where the pair replicated the process and live-streamed their independent improvisations.[187]

This experimental idea of 'telepathic performance' has been explored by other artists, the most notable perhaps being Pauline Oliveros, whose 1974 score *Sonic Meditations* included instructions for 'Telepathic Improvisation'. This piece does not initially deal with the same concepts as previously discussed and instead revolves around attempting to form a telepathic connection between audience and performer, but the score also includes a later instruction in which the 'Telepathic Improvisation' piece is to be performed and recorded by artists in unconnected spaces simultaneously.[188] This score has continued to remain relevant in

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[183] Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren, Davis Schneidermann and Tom Denlinger, *The Exquisite Corpse: Chance And Collaboration In Surrealism's Parlor Game*, pdf (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/portfolio.newschool.edu/dist/2/14941/files/2017/06/Exquisite-Corpse-7.9.11-1ay4t1v.pdf.; Marilyn Ludolph, "The History Of The Exquisite Corpse Art Form And How It Is Played - The National Children's Book And Literacy Alliance", thencbla.org, 2009, https://thencbla.org/the-history-of-the-exquisite-corpse-art-form-and-how-it-is-played/.

[184] "Party Pieces | John Cage Complete Works", Johncage.org, accessed 26 September 2021, https://johncage.org/pp/John-Cage-Work-Detail.cfm?work_ID=150; Sapphire Goss, *Interior: an Exquisite Corpse film*, film (London: 2020), https://www.sapphiregoss.com/eq; "MIA JOURNAL • ISSUE 3 • NOV 2020", Movingimageartists.co.uk, 2020, https://movingimageartists.co.uk/portfolio/mia-journal-issue-3-nov-2020/.

[185] Jacquelene Ashley Drinkall, *Telepathy In Contemporary, Conceptual And Performance Art*, pdf (Sydney: University of N.S.W., 2005), http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:1561/SOURCE01?view=true; Jacquelene Ashley Drinkall, *Human And Non-Human Telepathic Collaborations From Fluxus To Now*, pdf (Sydney: University of N.S.W., 2015), https://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1764681/drinkall.pdf.

[186] Danny McCarthy and Mick O'Shea, *The Telepathic Lockdown Tapes*, tape (Dublin: Farpoint Recordings, 2021), https://digital.farpointrecordings.com/album/the-telepathic-lockdown-tapes.

[187] Anna Murray, "Telepathic Document At The Edge", Journalofmusic.com, 2020, https://journalofmusic.com/criticism/telepathic-document-edge; The Guesthouse, The Quiet Club - The Telepathic Tapes - Live @ INDIE CORK 2021, video, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=968PaPyEZMs.

[188] Pauline Oliveros, *Sonic Meditations*, pdf (Smith Publications, 1974), 6–8, https://monoskop.org/images/0/09/Oliveros_Pauline_Sonic_Meditations_1974.pdf.

the field of performance art, with artists Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz basing their collaborative film/installation *Telepathic Improvisation* (2017) on the Oliveros score.[189]

The collaborative work of John Cage and Merce Cunningham also served as an inspiration for my approach, as the two would work on their dance and music compositions independently before combining their pieces in live performances.[190] As was the case with the previous 'telepathic' examples, it is worth addressing the most significant difference here with my work, that being that these pieces were live performances, which brings with it a very different set of practical and philosophical implications. There is also a large distinction to be made in the fact that Cage and Cunningham were composing completely independent pieces in two separate mediums, and it is more their approach to collaboration than their work directly that inspired me. I see my work here with Max not as a direct continuation of the ideas in these above-referenced works but as existing along similar lines in the broader context of experimental art.

There are, of course, some important distinctions to be made between live, performance-based examples such as these and *XENOBLAST*, one being that these works all place importance on the idea of the collaborating artists feeling an in-the-moment connection to each other that informs and drives how they contribute to the piece, which did not play a part in my and Max's approach as we gathered material at different times. Regardless, I still found these works to be highly informative and transferrable to my approach and practice, as it is the core concept of collaborators not knowing what the others are doing that inspired my approach.

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[189] "Telepathic Improvisation | Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz", Boudry-Lorenz.De, 2017, https://www.bodry-lorenz.de/telepathic-improvisation/; "Telepathic Improvisation—Boudry / Lorenz", EMPAC, 2017, https://empac.rpi.edu/events/2017/telepathic-improvisation.

[190] William Fetterman, "Merce Cunningham And John Cage: Choreographic Cross-Currents", *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 1 (1999): 121–142, doi:10.1080/07494469900640131.

7. AUDIOVISUALS

AUDIOVISUALS: Introduction

AUDIOVISUALS (08:50) is a series of six mini-films presented together, all made from the same pool of thirty audio and thirty visual materials, with each segment having its own unique editing process (a continuation of my structural approach seen in *FRAMERATES)*.[191] With this film, I wanted to experiment with a compositional process that would impose a range of processing manipulations on the recorded sounds and images, implementing different degrees of abstraction to the material in various combinations so that the materials fluctuate on a spectrum from easily identifiable to wholly unrecognisable (see Appendix E for a discussion on my approach to *AUDIOVISUALS*' compositional process and Appendix F for detailed overview of how the six mini-films were edited).

AUDIOVISUALS: Process & Methodology

With *FRAMERATES*, I had begun exploring a new aesthetic and technical approach to realising a filmic concept. Instead of taking a concept and making one continuous film, I produced a series of independent 'mini-films', all made from the same pool of materials with their own editing processes. These mini-films would function simultaneously as variations on a shared theme, separate fully formed films in their own right, and parts that, when taken together, make up a larger film/piece. I found that this approach was particularly effective in exploring the more technical considerations of *FRAMERATES* and I saw the potential to continue this approach with *AUDIOVISUALS*.

I was interested in the relationship that would form between the mini-films and how the different technicalities of the processes would be viewed in the context of what had already been seen and heard through the previous mini-films' processes. Each mini-film was produced independently, and each explore a self-contained technical process. At the same time, these processes, when taken together, result in the overarching process of the mini-film series. Because all the mini-films are essentially variations of each other, and all share their materials, the chronology of seeing-hearing them in sequence and the effect this would have on the experience of the processes was something I felt was a clear benefit of the mini-film series approach.

Another brief point to be made here is that this approach by design involves seeing and hearing the same materials repeatedly. I am fascinated by the experience of re-watching/re-listening and how an initial experience of surprise can evolve into something more complex as initially overlooked details are noticed and a deeper relationship begins to form between the piece and the viewer/listener.[192]

I initially considered approaching the process by gathering an equal amount of abstract and non-abstract audio and visual material. However, I ultimately decided that all the material gathered should be non-abstract and that the abstraction would come about through manipulations imposed on the material. In other words, I chose to explore abstraction through the editing process instead of gathering abstract material. I felt that this would lead to more interesting results as it would explore the abstract/non-abstract divide and

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[191] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 07_AUDIOVISUALS.mov

[192] While this point relates to a much broader reflection about my thoughts on the experience of rewatching my films, for the immediate discussion this showcases another reason why I was drawn to explore this approach in both *AUDIOVISUALS* and *FRAMERATES*.

allow me to experiment with degrees of abstraction in the editing stage, introducing additional layers of complexity and unpredictability into the process.[193]

This meant that while the material gathering stage would determine what sounds and images would be used in the film, it did not then lead to me knowing how everything in the film would sound and look, as the manipulations that would affect the materials would be unknown to me until the final stages of the process. This decision also shifted the focus away from a more simplistic exploration of abstract and concrete material interacting, as the film became equally concerned with the way concrete material can be manipulated and the knock-on effects this has on the previously discussed concepts of meaning, understanding, and experience. I was interested in seeing how the degree to which a material was rendered abstract would not only depend on the method of manipulation but also on the qualities of the material itself. This relationship between the material and the manipulation became as central to the process as the idea of an abstract/non-abstract divide was to the project's initial conception.

AUDIOVISUALS: Context & The Field of Experimental Music

While abstract visual art may seem to be an obvious source of inspiration for *AUDIOVISUALS*, I was far more inspired by musical works I would broadly describe as 'experimental-ambient'. Some notable examples are the albums *Ravedeath 1972* (2011) by Canadian electronic musician Tim Hecker, *Soundtracks For The Blind* (1996) by American noise-rock pioneers Swans, and *Hyper-Rainforest* (2014) & *Wind [Patagonia]* (2007), both by the Madrid-born sound artist Francisco López.[194] These works range widely in terms of styles and aesthetics, but they all showcase ways the abstract/concrete divide can be explored through different methods.

The opening track from Tim Hecker's album *Ravedeath 1972*, 'The Piano Drop', is an excellent example of a piece that makes the manipulation of sonic material the centre focus. Throughout the track, a looping synthesised melody is subjected to varying degrees of manipulation, which was done in real-time as Hecker recorded the album as a live performance.[195] These manipulations do not seem to happen in the background, like an audio effect that helps develop the sonic texture. Instead, the various processing methods used to implement changes become akin to a lead instrument in the composition.

This theme of what would otherwise be relatively simplistic musical material becoming incredibly complex and engaging through ever-evolving manipulations continues throughout the rest of the album, with tracks such as 'In The Fog II' and 'In The Air II' introducing non-electronic instruments into the mix such as piano and organ, the sounds of which morph between easily recognisable and highly abstracted through Hecker's live audio processing.[196]

Soundtracks For The Blind was primarily produced by Swans founder Michel Gira as a solo project. Gira originally intended it to be the final Swans album and to showcase the culmination of all his musical

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[193] There are many examples of artists working today that use digital post-production techniques to manipulate their audio and visual materials, such as sound artist Jody Elff, whose sonic sculptures and installations are made possible through the exploration of different ways to control and manipulate sound; Garry, "A Survey of Four Contemporary Sound Artists."; Alex Kitnick, "No Resolution: Video Art In and Around the Contemporary," Artforum, May 2023, https://www.artforum.com/features/alex-kitnick-on-video-arts-elusive-past-and-tenuous-future-252652/.

[194] Tim Hecker, *Ravedeath 1972*, CD (Reykjavík: Kranky, 2011), https://timhecker.bandcamp.com/album/ravedeath-1972; Swans, *Soundtracks For The Blind*, CD (New York City: Young God Records, 1996), https://swans.bandcamp.com/album/soundtracks-for-the-blind-2; Francisco Lopéz, *HYPER-RAINFOREST The Epoché Collection - Vol. 1*, CD (Nowhere Worldwide, 2014), https://franciscolopez.bandcamp.com/album/hyper-rainforest; Francisco López, *Wind [Pategonia]*, CD (Seattle: and/OAR, 2007), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBlx42LB5F4.

[195] Vincent Pollard, "Tim Hecker Talks Ravedeath, 1972", Exclaim, 2011, https://exclaim.ca/music/article/tim_hecker_talks_ravedeath_1972; Tim Hecker, "The Piano Drop," track 1 on *Ravedeath 1972*, Kranky, 2011, compact disc, https://timhecker.bandcamp.com/track/the-piano-drop.

[196] Hecker, "In The Fog II," track 3 on *Ravedeath 1972*, https://timhecker.bandcamp.com/track/in-the-fog-ii; Hecker, "In The Air II," track 11 on *Ravedeath 1972*, https://timhecker.bandcamp.com/track/in-the-air-ii.

ideas to date.[197] Throughout the album's 2 hours and 22-minute runtime, Gira mixes unidentifiable, abstract sounds such as obscure field recordings and manipulated electronic noises with more recognisable musical instruments, various vocal styles, and spoken word recordings. The continuous fluctuation between entirely abstract soundscapes and grounded noise-rock passages creates a captivating sense of sonic space that is simultaneously manufactured and seemingly unimaginable while also clearly defined and almost tangible. Tracks such as 'I Love You This Much' and 'I Was A Prisoner In Your Skull' showcase the wide range of sonic materials Gira draws from throughout the album. At the same time, 'All Lined Up' recalls the quality discussed in Tim Hecker's *Ravedeath*, where noticing the audio manipulations is unavoidable, shaping the listening experience as much as the material itself.[198]

Francisco López may initially seem out of place in this context, as his work can be described as soundscape compositions made from field recordings and, on the surface, does not seem to feature any apparent use of processing or manipulation. His compositions, such as *Hyper-Rainforest*, are often first presented as location-specific multi-speaker installations, with a stereo mix being subsequently produced and released in album format on CD.[199]

However, I noticed an interesting effect that both his compositions *Hyper-Rainforest* & *Wind [Patagonia]* produce, in that what initially seems to be concrete, non-manipulated material slowly begins sounding more abstract as the pieces progress. Across their 61- and 57-minute respective durations, Lopéz allows the soundscapes to evolve naturally to create a profoundly immersive sonic experience. This slow progression, coupled with the long durations, leads to an experience where the kind of listening you may initially have, identifying the sounds you are hearing for 'what they are,' slowly gives way to a listening more focused on the qualities of the sounds themselves. I found this listening experience particularly fascinating as it showcased an exploration of ideas relating to material and the experience of abstraction, even when no direct manipulations were employed to bring about this experience.

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[197] "Soundtracks For The Blind (Remastered 2018)", YOUNG GOD RECORDS, 2018, https://younggodrecords.com/products/soundtracks-2018.

[198] Swans, "I Love You This Much," track 20 on *Soundtracks For The Blind*, Young God Records, 2011, compact disc, https://swans.bandcamp.com/track/i-love-you-this-much-2; Swans ,"I Was A Prisoner In Your Skull." track 2 on *Soundtracks For The Blind*, https://swans.bandcamp.com/track/i-was-a-prisoner-in-your-skull-2; Swans, "All Lined Up," track 9 on *Soundtracks For The Blind*, https://swans.bandcamp.com/track/all-lined-up-2.

[199] Russell Cuzner, "Francisco López HYPER-RAINFOREST/YANAYACU", The Quietus, 2014, https://thequietus.com/articles/15560-francisco-lpez-hyper-rainforest-yanayacu-review.

8. UNTITLED DURATION

Untitled Duration: Introduction

Untitled Duration (20:22) is a textural exploration of the experience of time, made with improvisation at the core of the process.[200] Equally inspired by drone music, slow cinema & minimalist art, the film also responds to my recent work that has tended towards increasingly complex processes. This project continues my experimentations to develop an approach to filmmaking in which sounds and images exist as independent equals, in this case, choosing to examine how philosophical questions regarding time, duration, and our experience of both can relate to my concept of audiovisual emergence.

Untitled Duration: Process & Methodology

With the concept of slowness central to this project from the outset, I wanted both my process and the material itself to be approached with the same sense of minimalism in mind. I was drawn to the idea of a process that would involve almost no post-production editing, which turned my attention to the possibility of allowing the majority of the film to take form at the material-gathering stage. I decided to treat this initial stage as an opportunity for real-time composition through audio and visual improvisation.

As I knew that a) I wanted the process to involve recording real-time improvisations, and b) the entire film would consist of one unit with minimal editing, an interesting challenge was presented as to how this approach could work with my goal of allowing sounds and images to exist as independent equals. Initially, it seemed that if I were to record audio and visual improvisations, whichever was recorded first would have an unavoidable impact on the next, as I would have a good idea of how the timing of the two media would line up when combined while I was improvising. However, I composed a method that not only acted as a solution but also led to the film becoming a far more complex exploration of time than I had initially anticipated.

The process was as follows: For the sound track, I recorded a 20-minute electric bass improvisation and then recorded a second performance in which I attempted to re-play what I had improvised, with the edit simply involving these two recordings being combined as a left/right stereo mix. For the video track, I first recorded a 2-minute improvisation with my phone camera and then a second recording in which I re-created the movements of the first to the best of my ability. These improvisations were recorded at 240 frames per second, which allowed me to slow the material down X10 to fill the film's 20-minute duration. The second recording was then overlaid onto the first.[201]

Because of both the focus on improvisation and the process involving relatively little editing, I needed to give even more careful consideration to my choice of material, both in terms of what I would record and how I would record it. I needed to consider my ability to improvise and how the material would interact with itself when the two recordings were combined, all the while also bearing in mind the questions of time, duration, and the minimalist aesthetic I wanted to explore. I chose to perform with my electric bass as it offered wide flexibility in terms of free improvisation while also being able to explore sound on a more

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[200] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 08_UNTITLED DURATION.mov

[201] Other contemporary experimental filmmakers who have also embraced the possibilities of using mobile phone cameras to record material include 'Experimental Film Society' founder Rouzbeh Rashidi, who used his mobile phone camera for some segments of his ongoing serial film *Homo Sapiens Project* (2000-present), and Melissa Brattoni, whose films *In My Mind* (2018) and *Meshes of An Autumn Afternoon* (2017) were both shot on mobile phones; Alan Lambert, "Irish Experimental Film," Film Ireland Magazine, February 19, 2015, http://filmireland.net/2015/02/19/irish-experimental-film/; Susy Botello, "Experimenting with Smartphone Films," Medium, May 23, 2018, https://medium.com/smartphonefilmmaking/experimenting-with-smartphone-films-94a2b2973124.

minimal, textural level by combining it with a high-gain distortion pedal and tube amplifier.[202] I chose to use my phone as the video recording device as it offered the potential for the high frame rate needed for the process, as well as the wide flexibility in terms of setting that would allow me to explore extreme textural detail that would be impacted by the slightest movement.

For my bass improvisation, I chose to set up my instrument in a way that while I would have direct control over the notes played, I would not be able to control the feedback and sonic texture produced by the high-volume levels when recording or be able to anticipate how the two recordings would interact when combined. Similarly, for the video, I chose to record in a way that focused on the textural qualities produced by the recording process. While I could decide on the movements and see the resulting images in real-time, I did not know how the final video track would look when both recordings were layered and played at 10% speed.

Through this process, one of my primary interests was to explore questions related to the experience of time through the possibilities offered by recording technologies. I chose to explore them through an aesthetic of minimalism that embraced, above all, slowness. I was fascinated to see the experience of time produced by this kind of 'drone film' that, while appearing structurally static and unchanging, emphasises minute elements of the material, like texture in which complex rhythmic change is constantly underway beneath the apparent stasis. Through this approach, the concept of slowness raised more questions: What does it mean for audio or visual material to be slow, and how does this impact the audiovisual experience of durational time?

***Untitled Duration*: Context & The Field of Experimental Music**

A primary inspiration for my philosophical questioning and approach came from the field of drone music in various forms and sub-genres. I greatly admire the drone metal bands Earth and Sunn O))) for how they elevate amplifier distortion, typically thought of simply as a processing effect, to the central aspect of their music. By removing standard elements of heavy metal such as speed, vocals, percussion, rhythm, etc. and allowing the amplifier distortion's sonic texture of distortion to take the central role, not only does this result in music that emphasises the importance of the textural level of sound, but also produces a unique experience of time through the incredible slowness, or at times stasis, of the music.

When choosing to maintain the traditional heavy metal staples of riffs and chord progressions, albeit slowed down often to the point where no rhythm is discernible, the effect on the experience time is that of extreme slowness; the listener can still hear the music seeming to progress, but the slowness of pace gradually leads to heightened awareness of texture over melody, and traditional ideas of rhythm and time begin to lose relevance.[203] At other times, these bands further deconstruct heavy metal, basing entire tracks around single musical notes without any sense of progression through riffs.[204] In these instances, a fascinating relationship develops between the apparent stasis of the composition on the macro-level and the rich textural business on the micro-level, with the resulting experience of time being equally torn between static or unmoving and rapidly changing with every passing moment.

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[202] My interest in the electric bass also stemmed from the fact that it is generally used as an accompanying instrument and my desire to invert this trend. I believe this instrument has much to offer in the context of my practice, both in terms of the tones, textures, and sonic spaces it has the potential to unlock, and the creative freedom I feel as an improviser when performing with it as a solo instrument. For Andrea Dettori's research project that critically examines the role of the electric bass in contemporary music and poses the question of how it could come to be considered as a solo instrument, see: Andrea Dettori, "The Bass Guitar in the Contemporary Music," KC Research Portal, June 7, 2021, https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1050350/1050351.

[203] Earth, "Tibetan Quaaludes," track 2 on *Phase 3: Thrones and Dominions* (Seattle: Sub Pop Records, 1995), https://youtu.be/1uVERu-c2JI; Sunn O))), "Orthodox Caveman," track 4 on *Black One,* (Los Angeles: Southern Lord Recordings, 2005), CD, https://youtu.be/ONTRVdQghFA.

[204] Earth, "Like Gold And Faceted," track 3 on *Earth 2: Special Low Frequency Version,* (Seattle: Sub Pop Records, 1993), CD. https://youtu.be/p9-mapcKnrU; Sunn O))), "Ascension (A)," track 4 on *Pyroclasts*, (Los Angeles: Southern Lord Recordings, 2019), CD, https://youtu.be/MSx64_aPgOE.

Another point to note is that the field of drone metal is still a relative niche from both the drone music and heavy metal sides of the spectrum, with notably few cases of drone metal reaching outside of the underground music scene into other fields besides some film exceptions like *The Limits of Control* (2009) and *Mandy* (2018) featuring drone metal soundtracks.[205] I believe drone metal is a form of music rich in potential for both experimental music and film, and I want to add to this field through my work in films such as *Untitled Duration* and *Dice Roll.*

Outside of the drone metal sub-genre, the compositions of experimental musician and Fluxus artist La Monte Young, British electronic music act Coil, in particular their *Time Machines* (1998) album, and the work of dark ambient artists such as the Ukraine-based black metal act Moloch and German-born multimedia artist Thomas Köner were foundational to my appreciation and understanding of how the experience of time can be shaped and affected by a minimalist approach that emphasises texture and subtle development.[206]

Joanna Demers' expansive survey of experimental music, *Listening Through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music*, was foundational to my line of thinking regarding the way drone music is experienced and affects our experience of time. Demers argues that by drawing the listener's attention to the textural, physical aspects of sound that have traditionally been largely ignored or considered less important, the listening experience is drastically affected. The listener is invited to experience drone music not as a linear, forward-moving sequence of notes and rhythms. Instead, they can become immersed in a new sense of static time where each individual sonic moment exists as its own maximal element, not simply a step toward an eventual climax.[207]

***Untitled Duration*: Context & The Field of Experimental Film**

From the field of experimental film, works by Andy Warhol and David Lynch both informed my thoughts on how questions of time can be explored through extended durations of apparent stasis. Warhol made this a central theme of many of his longer, durational films, such as *Empire* (1965). *Empire* was Warhol's attempt to capture, through the media of (silent) film, the experience of seeing time go by, with its 8-hour and 5-minute runtime consisting of a single, static shot of the Empire State Building as evening turns to night.[208]

At face value, *Empire* can be described as Warhol's way of presenting a 'slice of time', removing virtually all aspects of conventional cinema so that only duration remains. While this sentiment is mainly true, it is worth highlighting the fact that *Empire* is shown in slow motion. Six hours of footage was recorded at a frame rate of 24fps and then screened at 16fps, extending the runtime to 8 hours and 5 minutes.[209] This gives the film an additional layer of complexity and philosophical intrigue, as the duration (or, the 'time') we are experiencing is not simply a recorded documentation of time's passing and, instead, it offers an entirely 'new' time, produced through the filmic process. It begs the question: if all there is to experience in the film is the passing of time via duration, and the duration of the film is different to the duration of the material when

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[205] Jim Jarmusch, *the Limits Of Control*, film (Madrid: PointBlank Films, 2009); Panos Cosmatos, *Mandy*, film (United States: SpectreVision, 2018).

[206] La Monte Young, *The Second Dream of The High - Tension Line Stepdown Transformer from The Four Dreams of China (1962)*, CD (New York: Gramavision, 1991), https://youtu.be/zYbenXFNqAY; Coil, *Time Machines*, CD (London: Eskaton, 1998), https://coilofficial.bandcamp.com/album/time-machines; Moloch, *Abstrakter Wald*, Digital (Ukraine: Depressive Illusions Records, 2012), https://molochukr.bandcamp.com/album/abstrakter-wald; Thomas Köner, *Nunatak Gongamur*, CD (Utrecht: Barooni, 1990), https://youtu.be/I0z-87tt-6w.

[207] Joanna Demers, "Maximal Objects in Drone Music, Dub Techno, and Noise," in *Listening Through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 91–112.

[208] Andy Warhol, *Empire*, film (New York: Warhol Films, 1965), https://www.moma.org/collection/works/303039.

[209] HENI Talks, "Jonas Mekas: The Making of Andy Warhol's 'Empire'," Vimeo video, 9:10, April 22, 2018, https://vimeo.com/265968646.

recorded, what exactly is the duration being experienced, and how does it relate to our experience of time passing?

It is also worth noting that due to the extreme duration, *Empire* is typically screened in a gallery setting where audiences can come and go as they please, which brings a very different viewing context than is the case with *Untitled Duration*.[210] This points to a broader contrast between my work and Warhol'. Whereas Warhol's use of extended durations offered a challenging viewing experience that, if embraced, could lead to an enriching experience for the viewer, I am more drawn to ways of exploring similar ideas through films that can be more actively engaged with. I want to show that, through works like *Untitled Duration,* it is possible to examine questions of time and duration without needing to take the now potentially more obvious route of extending the runtime to extremes and instead present a film that invites the viewer-listener to have a durational experience that is potentially more engaging and immersive than challenging or off-putting.[211]

David Lynch is another filmmaker whose handling of duration, both in his more overtly avant-garde and his narrative-driven films, has inspired my thinking on the topic. Whereas Warhol used extreme durations of almost imperceivable development to explore the phenomenon of time's passing, Lynch's approach is more subtle and, in my opinion, offers an even more thought-provoking insight into the concept of filmic time.

Throughout his TV series *Twin Peaks* (1990–1991, 2017) and accompanying film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* (1992), Lynch frequently extends the duration of shots or entire scenes to last longer than might seem natural.[212] Examples range from the relatively subtle, such as unnaturally long pauses between lines of dialogue, to the far more overt, like a lengthy scene in which the central character lies helpless on the floor after being shot and has an agonisingly drawn-out exchange with an elderly room service waiter.[213] This becomes increasingly the case in its third season, where Lynch acted as the sole director across the series' 18 hour-long episodes and includes numerous instances in which either something continues to happen for an uncomfortably long time or nothing seems to happen for equally unnerving durations (in one scene, a character is seen sweeping the floor for almost a full minute).[214]

In all of these moments, I believe Lynch is inviting the audience to notice what is typically taken for granted: the durational quality of film and the effect experimenting with this can have on the experience. Lynch uses this approach to create a surreal, dreamlike sense of time, drawing our attention to the duration of events in a way that decidedly shifts the context of the overall viewing experience. While films of mine, such as *Untitled Duration,* are non-narrative and do not share any specific aesthetic ties to Lynch, his work has had a resounding impact on how I think about the importance of duration as a core element of the filmic experience.

The artwork of abstract minimalist painters, such as Lucio Fontana and Mark Rothko, has also had an impact on my aesthetic sensibilities. I admire Fontana's move to investigate the spatial possibilities of the traditional canvas, with his numerous slashed canvas pieces seeming to draw equal attention to questions

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[210] Jonathan Muzikar, *Installation View Of The Gallery "Andy Warhol's Empire" In The Exhibition "Collection 1940S–1970S"*, image, 2020, https://www.moma.org/calendar/galleries/5260?installation_image_index=0.

[211] I, of course, acknowledge the validity and strength of art made to challenge audiences; I here simply wish to illustrate the points of contrast, as well as connection, between Warhol's approach and my own.

[212] Tantra Bensko, "The Slow Pace of Twin Peaks," Medium (ONLINE WRITING ACADEMY, July 26, 2017), https://medium.com/online-writing-academy/the-slow-pace-of-twin-peaks-467e8e732c36.

[213] *Twin Peaks*, season 2, episode 1, "May The Giant Be With You," directed by David Lynch, written by David Lynch and Mark Frost, featuring Kyle MacLachlan, aired September 30, 1990, ABC, Universal Pictures, 2007, DVD.

[214] *Twin Peaks*, season 3, episode 7, "Part 7," directed by David Lynch, written by David Lynch and Mark Frost, featuring Kyle MacLachlan, aired June 18, 2017, Showtime, Paramount, 2017, Blu-Ray; Friday Night Jones, "Twin Peaks: Roadhouse Sweeping Scene," YouTube video, 0:51, April 4, 2018, https://youtu.be/HPSymfryv08.

about texture and the physicality of the material and the process.[215] I am particularly drawn to the colour field paintings of Rothko's later work, taking inspiration from his removal of traditional elements of painting to focus purely on the affective nature of colour and relating this to my desire to set aside conventional filmic elements such as narrative and meaning.[216]

Untitled Duration: Context & The Philosophy of Time

Finally, another point of context for this project comes from my recent readings of philosophical works dealing with, directly and indirectly, metaphysical questions of time and our experience of it. In *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life: A System of Nihilism, Consciousness and Reality*, James Tartaglia covers a range of philosophical and metaphysical topics that all converge around his brand of nihilism that argues that life's meaninglessness is an unavoidable fact. He further argues that this is no cause for alarm or despair and that by acknowledging this, we can embrace life without needing external meaning to give it a sense of inherent purpose.[217] I see this as a parallel to my line of thinking regarding the lack of meaning in my films, which is only considered a negative aspect if the assumption is taken that films 'need' to have meaning, which I argue they do not.

In the book's latter stages, Tartaglia dedicates one chapter entirely to a discussion of time with a particular focus on the perception of time while dreaming.[218] I found his ideas on how our experience of the present 'now' in a dream state relates to the same 'now' outside of the dream to be thoroughly thought-provoking for its relevancy to the immersive, meditative experience of listening to drone music and how one's experience of duration relates to the actual time passing.[219]

Tartaglia concludes that "…the appearance of a moving present is an illusion created by conscious experience… We only seem to occupy a temporal position within the objective world because of our misrepresentations of experience," and while admitting to the potentially troubling line of thought regarding "the arbitrariness of 'now'," he suggests that by embracing these ideas you can find "a little respite, if not consolation, in the face of time." He goes on to explain that, "each interpretation of the transcendent 'now' brings with it the entire time of the objective world," and, "Thus when we reflect on transcendence…we find a reality free of the forward-directedness of life," which can, "allow us to transform boredom into metaphysical understanding." I was particularly taken by this line of enquiry for how it relates to my films, as meaningless as Tartaglia's conception of life itself, which I believe can also be seen as free from 'forward-directedness' in each individual moment.[220]

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[215] Adam Hencz, "Lucio Fontana: the Slashes on Canvas that Redefined How Art is Created," Artland Magazine, accessed April 20, 2022, https://magazine.artland.com/lucio-fontana/; Barbara Hess, *Fontana* (Köln: TASCHEN, 2017).

[216] Dietmar Elger, *Abstract Art* (Köln: TASCHEN, 2007), 74–75.

[217] James Tartaglia, *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life: A System of Nihilism, Consciousness and Reality* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 21–39.

[218] Tartaglia, *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life*, 125–45.

[219] Tartaglia, *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life*, 137.

[220] Tartaglia, *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life*, 144–45.

9. SUPERPOSITION

SUPERPOSITION: Introduction

SUPERPOSITION is a film consisting of one 18-minute audio piece and one 18-minute visual piece, both presented three times simultaneously from different starting points across three visual panels and three audio channels.[221] The film seeks to pose questions relating to the phenomenon of experiencing multiple things simultaneously and how gaining different perspectives on the same subject affects one's experience. I also wanted to see how, through an audiovisual medium, I could explore several philosophical and metaphysical conceptions of time and disrupt our (mis)conception of time's linear nature.

The title *SUPERPOSITION* relates to my idea that by presenting multiple pieces of recorded media side by side, I am inviting the viewer-listener to occupy a (super)position from which multiple points in time can be observed and experienced simultaneously. It also serves as a nod to the field of quantum mechanics, the quantum 'superposition' describing a system that can be described as existing in two different states simultaneously until being measured.[222] While this film does not directly seek to explore this area, this is another field I find myself fascinated by, particularly due to the emphasis on randomness and indeterminacy and the ongoing research into spacetime and the true nature of time.[223]

I approached both the audio and visual pieces that make up the film with the ideas and questions outlined above in mind, but they are not directly related in their processes as they were made independently as stand-alone pieces. I chose to experiment with a stripped-back approach to the process that emphasised improvisation, following on from my work in *Untitled Duration* and in response to some of my previous films featuring complex, multi-level randomisation and algorithmic processes (e.g., *AUDIOVISUALS*).

SUPERPOSITION: Process & Methodology

With *SUPERPOSITION*, I wanted to experiment with the traditional filmic screening setup of a single video piece and a single audio piece while also subverting the traditional triptych format that, while originating in 14th-century painting, is now often utilised in gallery-based experimental film and video art.[224] Through this, I wanted to explore the relationships formed between the 3 video panels, the three audio channels, and the audio and visual combination.

The video track comprises three screening areas or 'panels' of three different shapes and sizes. One 18-minute visual piece is displayed in all three of these panels simultaneously. However, in each panel, the starting point is different, i.e., one panel plays the video from the beginning through to the end, one panel plays it starting from 1/3 of the way in, and one panel plays it starting from 2/3 of the way in (6 minutes in and 12 minutes in, respectively). When the video reaches its endpoint in one of the panels in which it did not start at the beginning, it loops back to the start. This ensured that across the 18-minute duration, the entirety

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[221] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 09_SUPERPOSITION.mov

[222] Sean Carroll, *Something Deeply Hidden: Quantum Worlds and the Emergence of Spacetime* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2019), 34–38; Heidi Vella, "Quantum for dummies: the basics explained," E&T Engineering and Technology, April 16, 2019, https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2019/04/quantum-for-dummies-the-basics-explained/.

[223] Carroll, *Something Deeply Hidden;* For a discussion of a piece of collaborative experimental filmmaking by scientist Niccolò Bigagli and filmmaker Ramey Newell directly engaging with the field of quantum physics in a more literal way, see: Ellen Neff, "Quantum Physics Meets Experimental Filmmaking," Columbia Quantum Initiative, November 14, 2022, https://quantum.columbia.edu/news/quantum-physics-meets-experimental-filmmaking.

[224] Tatty Martin, "What is a Triptych?" Rise Arts, Accessed June 20, 2022, https://www.riseart.com/guide/2414/what-is-a-triptych; A. L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video: From the Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice*, 2nd edition (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 120.

of the video piece would be seen three times, once in each panel, each iteration out of sync with the others. The same process is at play in the audio track, with one 18-minute audio piece playing from three audio channels (left, centre/mono, right).[225]

Regarding its process, *SUPERPOSITION* shares ties with my earlier short film, *Overlap*. The aesthetics of these films were informed by my research into the tradition of structural filmmaking, a style of experimental film described by P. Adams Sitney as "...a cinema of structure in which the shape of the whole film is predetermined and simplified, and it is that shape which is the primal impression of the film."[226] Both *Overlap* and *SUPERPOSITION* are realised through structures such as this, with processes that can be potentially identified by an attentive viewer-listener and bring focus to the structuring itself and the shape of the films.

***SUPERPOSITION*: Presentation & Aesthetics**

Central to my thinking throughout the development of *SUPERPOSITION* was a desire to explore different ways of presenting my films; I wanted the film's presentation to embody the same philosophy of experimentation as the audiovisual content. While I originally planned on exploring the question, "What if multiple films were shown at once?" I became far more interested in the question, "What if the same film was shown multiple times at once?"

In my initial conception of this project, I envisioned it comprising three separate video pieces and three separate audio pieces that would play simultaneously on separate screens and speakers. While at first glance, this idea of a multi-screen/multi-speaker audiovisual presentation may seem to offer new and exciting ways of experimentation, I would like to offer several points to help elucidate my decision not to engage in this creative area. There is a rich history of expanded cinema, video art and audiovisual installation work spanning the past sixty years. These areas have developed into well-established art forms that focus on realising work in a given space, sometimes using multiple screens or audio channels.[227] While I appreciate and am inspired by audiovisual artists working in these expanded formats, I believe there is still great potential for new and exciting approaches and discoveries to be made by producing art in the 'single-screen and stereo speaker' film format. I believe that often, the most exciting work and creative decisions can stem from what can at first appear to be restrictions and limitations, and here I wanted to investigate how I could experiment with and disrupt the standard filmic screening setup while working within the constraints of the format.

Additionally, if I had separated the film into disconnected screens and speakers, I would have emphasised the separation between the audio and visual pieces, creating a piece that would most likely be perceived as three separate films playing simultaneously. As creatively and philosophically interesting as this is, this approach did not make sense with my creative intentions underlying *SUPERPOSITION*. The panels and audio channels are not intended to separate the audio and visual sequences from one another but are conversely meant to allow multiple points in time of the same pieces to be viewed/heard simultaneously. In other words, this multi-panel/channel aesthetic is set in place not to create distance between the sounds and images but to bring them closer together.

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[225] One difference of note is that for the audio the starting points are not at the 1/3 and 2/3 marks like in the video, instead the loops begin at 5 minutes and 13 minutes. This is because the 6- and 12-minute even distribution would lead to each 6-minute segment being almost identical as the same moments of audio would always play together (this was not an issue for the video due to the variation introduced by the differently sized and shaped panels).

[226] Sitney, *Visionary Film*, 348.

[227] Caitlin De Bérigny, G. Wu Wall C. and Phillip Gough, "Multiple-Channel Video Installation as a Precursor to New Forms of Transmedia Based Art," *International Journal of Technoetic Arts* 10, no. 2 & 3, (January 2012), 341–351. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/268516298_Multiple-Channel_Video_Installation_as_a_Precursor_to_New_Forms_of_Transmedia_Based_Art.

I also briefly considered the possibility of taking separate approaches to realising the audio and visual tracks, such as combining a single-screen video with a multi-speaker setup distributed around the viewing space. As evident, I ultimately chose to stick to the stereo mix approach. An important consideration behind this decision is my belief that the stereo field remains a relatively untapped area in experimental filmmaking. In the field of music, experimental or otherwise, exploring the capabilities of the stereo field has been a focus of various artists ever since stereo sound was made possible in 1881 by French engineer Clement Ader, with prominent bands such as The Beatles popularising at the time experimental approaches to stereo mixing.[228]

In the world of sound art, audiovisual installations, live experimental music, and significant multi-channel works featuring complex speaker arrangements that explore the spatialisation of sound are made possible by the increased availability of new technologies.[229] In narrative film, the stereo field is primarily used in sound design to spatially locate sounds to add to the sense of filmic realism and immersion. Modern films produced for cinematic and streaming release typically engage with new sound spatialisation technologies, the intention being that the resulting sound design and scoring can lead to a deeper sense of immersion and realism.[230]

However, I believe there is an opportunity for experimental filmmaking to embrace the stereo field more openly as a compositional tool, as it has been in the field of music for so many years. Given that a) experimental film began as a visual art form and b) the relative infancy of the art form compared to other longer-lasting traditions, I can see how just as sound, in general, has long been overlooked in experimental film, so has the stereo field itself.[231] Through my work, such as *SUPERPOSITION*, I want to show that there is still room for expansion and exploration concerning using the stereo field creatively in a filmic setting.

***SUPERPOSITION*: Audio & Video Pieces**

For these pieces, I focused on real-time improvisation, following on from my recent work in *Untitled Duration*, where I started to explore a more stripped-back approach that did not rely on any complex randomisation or algorithmic editing. Both audio and visual tracks consist of unedited 18-minute recordings.

For the video, I chose to record a nighttime walking route I frequently take, taking inspiration from artistic traditions such as Fluxus that embrace the creative and artistic potential found in everyday events and happenings.[232] For the audio piece, I embraced a more freely improvisatory approach, focusing on developing a wide array of short musical ideas and riffs based on a simple blues scale. I chose to record using a 5-string bass to increase the range I could work with and performed without any effects or processing to allow myself to focus purely on the patterns of notes and rhythms.

While my previous experiments with improvisation in *Untitled Duration* focused on stasis, texture, and drones, here I wanted to explore a) recordings that showcased a movement from one initial state through and

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[228] Hans Fantel, "100 Years Ago: The Beginning of Stereo," The New York Times, January 4, 1981, https://www.nytimes.com/1981/01/04/arts/100-years-ago-the-beginning-of-stereo.html; William D. Moylan, "The Beatles' revolutionary use of recording technology in 'Abbey Road'," The Conversation, October 1, 2019, https://theconversation.com/the-beatles-revolutionary-use-of-recording-technology-in-abbey-road-124070.

[229] Marije Baalman, "Spatial Composition Techniques and Sound Spatialisation Technologies," *Organised Sound* 15, no.3, (December 2010), 209–218, 10.1017/S1355771810000245.

[230] Marshal Rosenthal, "What is spatial sound, and how can it impact your content?" Videomaker, June 4, 2021, https://www.videomaker.com/how-to/audio-how-to/sound-design/what-is-spatial-sound-and-how-can-it-impact-your-content/.

[231] As I previously made reference to, this is supported by how little the discussion is ever focused on sound in the comprehensive writings on experimental film history such as the previously referenced works by P. Adams Sitney (*Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943–2000*) and A. L. Rees (*A History of Experimental Film and Video: From the Canonical Avant-Garde to Contemporary British Practice*). The writings on the topic of experimental film sound openly acknowledge this, though there are very few volumes on this subject. Two examples of such works are: *The Music and Sound of Experimental Film*, ed. Holly Rogers and Jeremy Barham (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017); Nicky Hamlyn, "Sound, Sync, Performance," in *Film Art Phenomena* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 167–82.

[232] Stéphanie Thrt, "Fluxus: from life to art," Medium, March 2, 2018, https://medium.com/stephaniethrt/fluxus-from-life-to-art-dac5ab1cfa03; Stephen Johnstone, ed. *The Everyday: Documents Of Contemporary Art,* (Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery, The MIT Press, 2008).

towards a different end state and b) the reflective side of improvisation that can lead to quiet, almost empty moments which are equally valid to moments of activity. This latter point led me to my decision to film the video at night so that the darkness of unlit areas would naturally lead to moments where nothing could be seen. This same point also influenced my mindset when approaching the audio recording process. I allowed for moments of silence, only playing when a new musical idea struck me, as opposed to a continuous performance without gaps.[233]

The primary reason behind taking this single recording approach (instead of gathering numerous recordings and ordering them through an editing process) was that I wanted *SUPERPOSITION* to embody a disruption to a linear sequence (i.e., beginning at A, moving through B and ending at C). I recently began to address head-on the notion of film being, at its core, durational. Duration suggests narrative (not to be confused with plot) or, at the very least, linear progression (i.e., regardless of content, a film starts at point A in time and continues until it finishes at a later point B in time, as opposed to a traditionally non-durational art such as painting). I previously experimented with ways of addressing and subverting this with my approach in *Untitled Duration*, which focused on concepts of stasis and 'slow time', and *SUPERPOSITION* represents a continuation of this line of attack. By choosing audio and visual material that is overtly linear and then presenting it in a way that simultaneously preserves and distorts its linear progression, I sought to experiment with how our (mis)conception of time can be explored through the durational audiovisual art that is film.[234]

***SUPERPOSITION*: Context & The Philosophy of Time**

One philosopher whose conception of time I found particularly engaging was Henri Bergson. Central to Bergson's thinking on time is a distinction he makes between 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' time.[235] Quantitative time refers to units of time as measured in space, i.e. how long it takes something to get from point A to point B (e.g., 1 hour, 2 minutes, 3 seconds, etc.). Bergson argues that in measuring how long any event or process takes, we are actually comparing two spatial movements. For example, by saying process X takes 5 minutes to complete, we are measuring the elapsed time in terms of units, in this case, minutes or seconds. These units are directly related to hours, 24 of which make up one complete revolution of the Earth, which we call a day (i.e., how long it takes the Earth to move spatially from point A to point B). Therefore, while it seems as though when we measure process X as taking 5 minutes, we are measuring something temporal, Bergson argues we are just comparing process X to the process of the Earth's rotation. Thus, according to Bergson, our traditional measurements of time are spatial, and because any given unit of time represents time that has, by definition, already elapsed, these measurements can, therefore, tell us little to nothing about our actual lived experience of time passing.[236]

This brings us to qualitative time, which, on the other hand, describes a way of conceptualising time that Bergson felt was more useful when considering our lived experience of the phenomenon. Qualitative time represents the 'flow' of time from any instance, a state of flux that does not consist of multiple isolatable

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[233] There is a rich history in sound art and experimental music of improvisation, a contemporary example being the work of Dennis McNulty whose approach explores site-specific performance, digital programming, and improvisation; Garry, "A Survey of Four Contemporary Sound Artists."

[234] Before going further, I would note that it is not my intention to try to make a film based on my view of how time (and our experience of it) works. Furthermore, with *SUPERPOSITION,* I am not attempting to represent in an audiovisual way one of these ways of viewing time. I am, instead, allowing my philosophical interest in this area to serve as an inspiration for my approach. My goal was to simply exemplify the idea of there being more than one way of thinking about time and to disrupt the commonly held beliefs about its linear nature. With this caveat in place, my research into philosophical writings and metaphysics has introduced me to a range of ideas on time from prominent philosophical thinkers.

[235] Melvyn Bragg et al., "Bergson and Time," in *In Our Time*, produced by BBC Radio 4, podcast, MP3 audio, 51:21, https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m0004s9w, 19:15–21:42.

[236] Bragg et al., "Bergson and Time," 10:50–16:05; Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard-Leonard, "Henri Bergson," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* July 3, 2021, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/bergson/.

units but is instead made up of the past flowing into the present.[237] Bergson's concept of la durée ('duration' or 'lived time'), by which he refers to the subjective experience of the flow of time, is of central importance here. To Bergson, the past and present coexist in a continuous state of flux as one melts into the next. He uses this concept of duration (i.e., the experience of duration, not to be confused with the standard definition of duration as referring to how long something takes in units of time) to explore this experiential phenomenon.[238]

Bergson never dismissed the validity or importance of being able to measure time quantitatively, instead offering the stance that an additional, different way of conceptualising time (i.e., qualitative time) is required to understand time in terms of human experience. Another thing to note here is that Bergson viewed the future as entirely unknown and, ultimately, unreal. In this sense, he did not ascribe to a universe determined by mechanistic causality, which accounts for his arguments for the existence of free will, among other things.[239]

This brings me to how Bergson's work and concepts from the philosophy of time more broadly relate to my film practice and my approach to *SUPERPOSITION*. I have become increasingly interested in the experiential nature of my films, wanting to explore the relationship between a film's duration (i.e., how long we measure it from start to finish) and the viewer-listener's experience of that duration. Bergson's concepts of quantitative and qualitative time have helped inform my thinking about filmic duration, particularly his emphasis on attempting to account for the lived experience of time. As my films are non-narrative, both on the surface without any sense of story, idea, or theme to be expanded on over time and on a deeper level due to the arbitrary nature of any perceived linear progression, I would like my work to offer a way of experiencing filmic time in a different way to both traditional films and most experimental films that contain some sense of narrative or meaning.

I see my films as an invitation to focus on each audiovisual moment without being required to extrapolate any hidden meaning or information, setting up a space where experience can take over from an otherwise more intellectual engagement with the material. In this regard, I am fascinated by the different ways that time can be perceived and experienced when this alternative mode of viewing/listening, one that does not involve thinking beyond what is being experienced to some external idea or conception, is engaged.

I also see an analogy between Bergson's way of thinking about time flowing from the real past into the real present while the future remains unknown and undetermined and the process by which my films come into being. I view this process as very much being in a state of constant flux: each decision having an instant run-on effect on all subsequent occurrences, with the result being entirely unknowable to me until the film is revealed to me in the final stage of the process. In this sense, while working on these projects, I see each film's future as initially being wholly undetermined, its final form growing from every in-the-moment decision and happening.

While I find this philosophical reading of time expounded by Bergson to be thought-provoking, I am not suggesting that I view this to be the most accurate or convincing metaphysical description of time. For example, I am deeply interested in the ongoing debate in the philosophy of time regarding presentism vs eternalism. Bergson's views broadly fall in line with presentism, the idea being that time is progressing forward through a 'moving present' and sharing Bergson's thought that while the present exists, the future does not exist until it becomes the present. Bergson's philosophy does not entirely capture the full extent of

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[237] Bragg et al., "Bergson and Time," 19:15–21:42.

[238] Jonny Thomson, "Why philosopher Henri Bergson rejected the word "time"," BigThink, October 8, 2021, https://bigthink.com/thinking/henri-bergson-time/; G. Watts Cunningham, "Bergson's Conception of Duration," *The Philosophical Review* 23, no. 5 (September 1914), 525–539, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2178586.pdf.

[239] Lawlor and Moulard-Leonard, "Henri Bergson."

presentism, however, as presentism reaches further to say that, as well as the future, the past does not exist either, and only the present moment is truly real.[240]

On the other hand, eternalism is the idea that the past, present, and future are all equally real and, in a sense, co-exist. It seeks to dismantle the idea that our subjective experience of time as a linear progression is the true nature of time. Instead, it argues that every moment in time is equally and 'eternally' real. This conception of time falls squarely in line with the idea of a deterministic universe that is, in one sense, almost static. It states that we are not truly moving 'forward' through time at all, despite our intuitive understanding of our own experience. These two approaches to time have many layers of nuance and principle ideas from both camps that can be combined to explore a broad range of ways to think about time.[241]

My compositional approach to *SUPERPOSITION* shares close ties to eternalistic thinking as it seeks to disrupt any sense of before, during and after (i.e., past, present, and future). It shares similarly close ties to philosopher James Tartaglia's thoughts on time and his view of our experience of the moving present to be merely an illusion (though Tartaglia's stance on time is not strictly speaking eternalistic as his philosophy argues for the notion that reality is transcendent which pits him against a wide range of opposing standpoints, including deterministic materialism).[242] By placing the viewer-listener in a (super)position where multiple points in time can be experienced as seemingly co-occurring, the linear nature of time can be exposed as (potentially) just a human construct and not a fact of reality.[243]

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[240] David Ingram and Jonathan Tallant, "Presentism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, February 1, 2022, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2022/entries/presentism/.

[241] John Heil, "Time Goes By – Or Does It?" in *What Is Metaphysics?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021), 10–19; Nina Emery, Ned Markosian, and Meghan Sullivan, "Time," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, November 24, 2020, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/time/.

[242] James Tartaglia, "Time," in *Philosophy In A Meaningless Life: A System of Nihilism, Consciousness and Reality* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 123–145.

[243] On this final point, the philosopher whose view of time I find myself most aligned with is Immanuel Kant. However, as I have previously discussed the influence of Kant's work on my philosophy of experimental filmmaking in Chapter 2, section 1, '(The Emergence of) Audiovisual Experience', I have chosen not to discuss his work further here in the interest of avoiding repetition.

10. TIMELINES

Timelines: Introduction

Timelines is an exploration of the perception of time's passage and audiovisual emergence, presented through 15 independent audio and visual pieces that interweave across the film's 60-minute runtime.[244] The title here refers to several things at once: 'timelines' meaning a series of events in a given chronological or linear order, 'timelines' as relating to the concept of multiple universes or alternative realities, each with their own distinct 'timeline', and 'timelines' being the audiovisual editing term for the region on screen in the editing software in which the audio and visual material is assembled.

Following my work in *Untitled Duration* and *SUPERPOSITION*, this film seeks to engage philosophically with a range of questions relating to time, duration, and the perceived linearity of our temporal experiences.

I also wanted to experiment further with longer durations, both in terms of materials and processes. The 60-minute runtime led me to engage with the technicalities of the process on several different levels, from the material gathering through the individual segment processing and up to the final editing stage. As I will describe in more detail below, part of my idea was to develop processes that did not involve any of my usual editing methodologies, and this, combined with the longer runtime, allowed for a high degree of complexity at the process level without resulting in the more frenetic pacing that characterises some of my previous work.

Timelines: Process & Methodology

One overarching process was applied across the 60-minute runtimes of both the audio and video tracks, following on from previous works such as *[sync] I*, *[sync] II*, and *XENOBLAST* that featured one compositional process for both sound and video. I have summarised this process in 5 steps below. While the audio and video tracks were both composed through the same process, they were made entirely separately, i.e. the same process was applied independently twice, once to the audio material and once to the visual material (See Appendix G for annotated images taken of the editing process to serve as a visual aid for the following description).

60-Minute *Timelines* Process:

- Fifteen pieces of varying durations, which add up to 60 minutes, are first prepared (See Appendix H for a description of the processes behind the 15 audio and 15 video pieces; see Appendix I for the tables of categories used during the material gathering and editing stages).

1. 2 X 60-minute sequences are made by generating two random orderings of the 15 pieces (audio or video). One order is referred to as the 'Base Timeline', the other as the 'Alternative Timeline' (the term 'timeline' here refers to the region in an editing programme where the material is ordered)
2. These two sequences are layered, but only the Base Timeline is visible/audible. The Alternative Timeline is not visible/audible but is still present in the edit.
3. At the starting point of each of the 15 pieces in the Base Timeline, a segment is brought from the Alternative Timeline to replace what is seen/heard on the Base Timeline. This segment is of duration equal in seconds to the minute at which it is occurring (e.g. if the replacement happens at 00:00, it is taking place in the 1st minute, and so the segment is 1 second long; at 04:00, it is taking place in the 5th minute, and so the segment is 5 seconds, etc.).

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[244] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 10_TIMELINES.mov

4. The segment of the Base Timeline that has been replaced is then moved to the point in the Base Timeline where the segment that replaced it is and replaces it (e.g. if the last 10 seconds of Piece 3 from the Alternative Timeline replaces the first 10 seconds of Piece 5 in the Base Timeline, then that first 10-second segment of Piece 5 is moved to replace the last 10 seconds of Piece 3 in the Base Timeline.)
5. This process is repeated at the starting point of each of the 15 pieces.

Some results of this process to note:
- Each of the 15 pieces will be seen/heard in full; no segment will be excluded.
- No segment of any piece will be seen/heard more than once; there will be no repetition.
- There is the potential for a chain reaction of replacements to take place (though this is not a necessary outcome and is determined by how the process develops).

Timelines: Philosophy & The Perception of Temporal Order

My research into the Philosophy of Time also served as a source of inspiration for my compositional approach to the process of *Timelines*. I am interested in the perception of temporal order and the role this plays in determining human experience. This is an area of overlap between the fields of Philosophy of Time and Philosophy of Mind, drawing from broader contemporary philosophical problems such as our experience of change, duration, and time's flow in terms of perceived speed and direction. In particular, I am interested in how the order of events perceived in sequence shapes our experience and understanding and the temporal relationship that appears to rise between them.[245]

I believe this is especially relevant to my films, in which the materials are not ordered according to any narrative, meaning, or intentional linear sequence. In all styles of filmmaking based on any level of the communication of meaning, the order in which the audio and visual material is experienced is essential for said meaning to be understood. In *Timelines*, the 15 audio and 15 video pieces were made independently, with each piece being fully realised in itself. When viewed in sequence, there is no meaning-related reason behind the order in which these pieces are presented (i.e. there is no reason that you need to see or hear any given material before or at the same time as any other).

Although there is no intentional reasoning determining the order, the material is nonetheless experienced through time in a specific order, that being the arbitrary ordering of the given realisation of the process. Therefore, there is no real progression or development as the film plays on. The materials seen and heard do not 'follow on' from each other or 'add up' to anything, and any apparent connection observed between materials is a result of the temporally ordered experience that takes place exclusively in the mind of the viewer-listener. This applies to the ordering of the video pieces, the audio pieces, and the combined ordering of the two tracks taken together. For example, video piece 3 could be seen after video piece 5, before video piece 8 and at the same time as audio piece 12, and this temporal relationship will affect the viewer-listener's experience of video piece 3. However, this relationship only appears to arise due to the human experience of perceived temporal order, which also allows the experience of audiovisual emergence to take place.

I also wanted the process to explore ideas relating to the existence of things simultaneously across multiple points of time that are not at that point 'the present' so that something can be said to exist before, during, and after any given moment. In *Timelines*, the linear temporal relation between the 15 audio and video pieces is questioned and problematised through the movement and replacement of material in the Base and Alternative Timelines. When a segment of any given piece is replaced and moved to a new point in the

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[245] Sean Enda Power, *Philosophy of Time: A Contemporary Introduction* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2021), 157–69; Huw Price, "The Flow of Time," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, ed. Craig Callender (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 276–311; Barry Dainton, "Time, Passage and Immediate Experience," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, 382–419.

sequence, that piece can be said to exist at once before, during and after another piece. For example, there can be a situation where video piece 3 begins sometime after video piece 8, but segments of piece three can also occur before or in the middle of piece 8. This is because these segments are not standalone materials but parts of unified pieces; attempting to describe the temporal relation between the pieces quickly reveals the limitations of linearity as a mode of thought and experience.

This line of thinking is primarily inspired by tenseless theories of time, such as the B-series, which describes events in time in terms of how they relate to each other in terms of them happening earlier, simultaneously, or later.[246] These theories maintain that seemingly intuitive concepts such as a unique present and temporal passage are "not fundamental to time or change" and problematise notions such as that something can exist only in the present moment and that things in the past or the future do not exist.[247] I am fascinated by these theories, and I believe that my non-narrative, duration-based experimental film practice is particularly well-suited to the philosophical exploration of these areas.

Timelines: Philosophy & Self-generative Randomness and Causation

Regarding my aesthetic and methodological considerations, I wanted the overarching process to display a level of organic, self-generative randomness. With my previous film processes, while the outcomes always have a high degree of unpredictability due to the randomness of the chance operations, the overall level of randomness is pre-determined by the given process. With *Timelines*, the process does not dictate how much randomisation the material will be subjected to. Instead, this arises from the relationship between the two randomly generated orderings. The result of this can be seen by comparing the audio and video tracks of *Timelines:* the randomised orderings generated for the visuals resulted in more cuts and replacement of material than that generated for the audio.

An area of philosophy that inspired this aspect of *Timelines'* process is that of causation and how cause and effect relate to our understanding of time. For example, does our everyday experience of cause and effect in the world result in an accurate picture of how reality objectively is or is causation an unavoidable product of our temporally ordered perceptions? And how does this seemingly inescapable feature of experience arise in an experimental film setting, if at all? I allowed these lines of thought to guide my compositional approach to *Timelines*. I wanted to compose a process that would give each edit the potential to cause further edits, thus exhibiting the attributes of cause and effect. At the same time, as I have already discussed, there is no intentional reasoning behind the temporal ordering of the materials. Therefore, while there is seemingly a causal relation between edits at the level of the overarching process, none can be found between the materials.[248]

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[246] Power, *Philosophy of Time*, 31–33, 52–55; Heil, *What Is Metaphysics?,* 11–14; Dean Zimmerman, "Presentism and the Space-Time Manifold," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, 163–68; Cliff Stagoll, "Killing Time," *Philosophy Now: The Ultimate Guide to Metaphysics*, February 2019, 24–27.

[247] Power, *Philosophy of Time*, 52; Craig Bourne, "Fatalism and the Future," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, 41–67.

[248] My interest in questions surrounding causation stems from engagement with scientific writings relating to cause and effect in terms of our current understanding of relativistic physics and quantum theories, philosophical writings such as the second of Immanuel Kant's three 'Analogies of Experience' and the writings of Scottish Enlightenment philosopher David Hume, and contemporary metaphysical problems in the Philosophy of Time and Philosophy of Mind. Power, *Philosophy of Time*, 99–102, 186–88; Douglas Kutach, "The Asymmetry of Influence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, 248–75; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 212–227. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter Millican (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 44–57; Heil, *What Is Metaphysics?*, 64–68, 88–105; Sally Latham, "Hume, Hobnobs and Metaphysics," *Philosophy Now: The Ultimate Guide to Metaphysics*, February 2019, 17–19; Stephen Mumford and Rani Lill Anjum, *Causation: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

I should also briefly note that the process was also inspired by the concept of 'backwards-causation', in which the seemingly fundamental temporal order of cause preceding effect is reversed.[249] The important thing to note here again is that while the process determines arbitrary orderings of the audio and visual materials in the Base and Alternative Timelines, the combination of these orderings is what determines the final sequential order. This means that when *Timelines* is taken sequentially from start to finish, it can be said that numerous edits have been caused by future edits that have not yet been experienced. This is not intended as any comment on the scientific possibility of backwards-causation and is instead meant to question once again the relationship between the perceived temporal order of events in time and causation within the framework of human experience.[250]

I also wanted to experiment with a process that balanced complexity and simplicity. Some of my previous work, such as *FRAMERATES* and *AUDIOVISUALS,* have come about through complex processes involving many materials/layers/cuts/steps/etc. With *Timelines*, my idea was to have relatively few edits occur across the 60-minute runtime but for each of these edits to have a significant impact on the overall film, both in terms of how each cut changes the shape and dynamic of the audio and visual tracks and also how each linear edit had the potential to create a knock-on effect of multiple other edits, as discussed above regarding causation.

Timelines: Audio & Video Pieces

My creative decisions regarding the audio and visual pieces came about from my desire to explore how time is atomised by audio and video recording technologies and how this relates to my ongoing engagement with the Philosophy of Time. One of the central issues in current philosophical debates regarding time is that of persistence and change, with several competing theories attempting to answer the questions as to how an object can be said to continue existing in time and undergo change. Of these, I find myself drawn to that of perdurance, the theory that what we would typically think of as objects are, in fact, 'temporal parts' of the actual objects that 'perdure' across time.[251]

In addition to finding this theory convincing for its effectiveness at solving several philosophical problems regarding change and persistence (while admitting that it runs counter to our intuitions about objects, as it follows that we are only ever perceiving 'parts' of a greater whole that is inaccessible to us), I am also drawn to it for how it relates to my experience of working with audio and visual material. Even my shortest film is made up of a vast number of individual images and audio grains, with the film itself as an entity not being wholly present at any one point in time but instead existing as a perduring object across its lasting duration. I believe that all existing objects can be thought of in this way. For example, the chair you are sitting on is not the fully formed object it seems to be any more than one frame of a film is the fully formed film, and it is instead just a singular part of the temporal object that is the chair, which is perduring across the duration of its existence. [252]

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[249] Power, *Philosophy of Time*, 102–07; Lawrence Sklar, "Time Travel and Time Machines," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, 585–88; Keith Seddon, "Precognition and Backwards Causation," *Philosophy Now: The Ultimate Guide to Metaphysics*, February 2019, 20–22.

[250] While backwards-causation may seem easy to rule out as a scientific impossibility, particularly given our understanding of entropy, it is worth considering that this again may say more about our temporally ordered mode of experience than it does about an objective feature of reality. Research into the concept of entropy is leading to a greater understanding of the apparent direction of time, with the entropic order of the universe seeming to explain the psychological experience of temporal order. For more on this, see Sean Enda Powers discussion on entropy and bacwards causation, specifically in terms of philosopher Adrian Bardon's 'entropy account of perception' in Power, *Philosophy of Time*, 104–07.

[251] Power, *Philosophy of Time*, 76–82; Heil, *What Is Metaphysics?,* 10–19; Yuri Balashov, "Persistence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Time*, 17–25.

[252] An example of an artist finding inspiration for their methodology in a particular branch of philosophy is digital musician Thor Magnusson, who has discussed the inspiration of the Philosophy of Mind on their work that explores programming and algorithmic compositions; Garry, "A Survey of Four Contemporary Sound Artists"; Hugill, *The Digital Musician*, 261.

Regarding my aesthetic approach for the audio and visual pieces, I wanted to blur the lines between me as a creative agent, the recording/processing technology, and the subject being recorded, problematising the question of where the resulting sounds and images 'came from'. Instead of the traditional distinction between the artist, their tools, and their materials, here I was working in a way that could perhaps be better described as a collaboration between myself, the technology and the subject. I took the role of a director who shapes and guides the process towards a result impossible to plan or pre-imagine due to the unpredictable nature of the collaborators.[253]

Also of central importance was the emphasis on in-the-moment creative decisions and improvisation, simultaneously contrasted with and complimented by the lack of control and foresight I had over how my actions would affect the resulting sounds and images. It was important that how I introduced manipulation (in both the audio and video material) allowed me to make free creative decisions within the prescribed limitations while, at the same time, the audio and visual outcomes of my choices were only evident to me afterwards. For example, I was free to move the camera in whatever way I chose for the video pieces that required me to perform heavy manipulations while recording. However, this freedom did not result in me knowing how the recording would look until it was finished, and the decisions I made were based on intuition, not on any pre-imagined result.

[253] For an in-depth look at the work of experimental filmmakers from the early 1970s to the late 1990s focusing on their engagement with the technologies available to them, with an extended section on digital tools and media, see: Malcolm Le Grice and Sean Cubitt, *Experimental Cinema in the Digital Age* (London: BFI, 2019), 213-310.

CONCLUSION:
NOCTURNAL SYNTHESIS

This research aimed to develop my experimental filmmaking practice and philosophy. Because of this, the point at which my research concludes is not truly an endpoint; instead, it marks the starting point of the next stage of my now-established creative practice. As such, I believe the most fitting way to conclude this portfolio is not to look back on my body of work, reflect on the range of ideas I have previously discussed or present a summary of my research, but instead to look at my final film project, *Nocturnal Synthesis* (24:22), the film I see as simultaneously representing both the culmination of this PhD research and the future direction of my creative practice.[254]

First, I will briefly outline *Nocturnal Synthesis'* compositional process.[255] *Nocturnal Synthesis* comprises six audio and six video pieces, all six minutes long. Each of these pieces is made up of twenty-five recorded materials, all playing simultaneously in accordance with an editing process that merges and blends the materials in constantly changing ways.[256] These 6 video pieces were then arranged across two overlapping editing tracks, continually fading in and out as the pieces, to varying degrees, both merge with and obscure each other (this structure was also applied to the audio pieces). The result of this compositional process is that the sounds and images seen and heard in the final film are almost entirely removed from their original form, each recording having initially merged with all the other recordings in its respective audio or video piece before merging further with the other pieces.[257]

The overarching idea of using independently made pieces as materials in the final film's structuring is something I have explored on several occasions, the earliest and clearest example being the arrangement of *November 2020*. Before *Nocturnal Synthesis,* I had recently experimented with a new take on this idea with *Timelines* where, instead of presenting the multiple pieces I made in full, I composed an editing process that treated the pieces as if they were materials, leading to them being cut up and arranged in new configurations across the film's duration.

With *Nocturnal Synthesis*, I wanted to push this idea further by combining it with another recurring trend in my work, namely the layering of recorded materials. *Nocturnal Synthesis* is, therefore, made up of a variety of independently made pieces, but in the final film, they are not presented in this way; instead, the

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[254] While I could discuss this film in the form of a full commentary as I have with my previous film projects, I feel that it is better for a discussion of *Nocturnal Synthesis* to focus on the way I see it representing the conclusion of my research. Furthermore, given the level of insight and understanding the reader will have gained in regard to my films and creative practice, I believe that the reader can engage with *Nocturnal Synthesis* as a viewer-listener without the necessity of a full commentary.

[255] Link to the folder of portfolio film project video files:
https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=kZ5TNnZ3WCFpdADjM5q926KEOQNayh9XQMV&ep=1#tpl=publicfolderlist
Password to access the folder: bradstockphdfiles
Relevant video file: 11_NOCTURNAL SYNTHESIS.mov

[256] These materials are of varying durations between 2 and 8 seconds and are all played back in continually repeating loops. The video process saw all 25 recordings being overlaid and blended together, with their placement in this overlapping stack slowly shifting throughout the pieces' durations. The audio pieces saw all 25 recordings being spread evenly across the stereo field, with their positions also slowly shifting throughout the pieces' durations. See Appendix J for more details on the compositional process of the individual pieces and their materials.

[257] I have outlined my thoughts on the topic of blending recordings together in Chapter 4, section 1: 'Aesthetics of Combination and Growing Materials'. This idea has realised itself in many of my compositional processes. For example, *FRAMERATES*, *Collision*, *Overlap*, *XENOBLAST*, *Untitled Duration*, and many segments from the *NOVEMBER* project all include editing processes that see recordings overlapping in ways that allow new sounds and images to emerge. However, in almost all of these examples, the number of materials being combined was relatively low, quite often often with only 2 or 3 materials being presented together. The large number of materials being combined in *Nocturnal Synthesis* and the aesthetic results this led to makes me feel that this film represents both a continuation of this trend in my work as well as an important new stage in the development of my compositional processes.

separation between the pieces that existed in their creation is entirely broken down by the overlapping editing structure.[258]

When reflecting on the films that make up my body of research, I believe they can be roughly grouped into two categories based on their underlying structure and resulting aesthetic.[259] Films such as *November 2020 – 2021 – 2022*, *[sync] I – [sync] II*, *XENOBLAST*, and *AUDIOVISUALS* are examples of films assembled from a wide range of identifiably distinct pieces of recorded material. As such, in these films, the materials function like building blocks presented in a linear order that unite, allowing the film to take form when experienced in sequence by the viewer-listener.[260]

Conversely, films such as *Untitled Duration*, *SUPERPOSITION*, and *Overlap* are examples where my approach led to a more continuous structure, where the recorded materials span the films' total durations uninterrupted.[261] In these films, the lack of any obvious break in the materials leads to a more monolithic, drone-like aesthetic, with the film slowly emerging as the sounds and images reveal themselves over the course of their durations.

I see *Nocturnal Synthesis* as bridging the gap between these categories, seeming to exist both between and beyond my past films.[262] While it is likely apparent to a viewer-listener that the film has been made from a large pool of distinct materials, at the same time, the continually overlapping manner in which they have been assembled makes it difficult to truly isolate any singular recording and consider it as an independent sound or image, in my view giving the film a paradoxical aesthetic of constant change and all-encompassing indivisibility.

In the introduction to this portfolio, I mentioned that I developed the practical side of my filmmaking practice in parallel with the philosophical side. In all of my films leading up to *Nocturnal Synthesis*, I explored the central ideas lying at the foundation of my filmmaking philosophy (namely compositional audiovisual relationships of independence and equality, the rejection of meaning as a presupposition, and unknowable filmic results) and the process of making each of these films helped me to understand better the practice I have been developing. In a sense, all of my films served two equally valid creative purposes: to exist in their own right as fully realised pieces of filmic art and to exist in the context of my creative practice to help me better understand my own intentions, approaches, and philosophy.

When working on *Nocturnal Synthesis*, however, I came to the realisation that I had achieved a level of personal insight into my creative practice that made it so I was no longer making the film with the implicit goal of furthering my understanding of the kind of filmmaking I am engaged with. In each of my previous films, I explored other creative and philosophical ideas in addition to those foundational to my practice (such as, for example, audiovisual synchronicity and rhythm, the linearity of time and causation, the experience of duration, etc.). When making *Nocturnal Synthesis*, I began to more clearly understand that as my research has led me to become fully in tune with the nature of my creative practice, this will allow me to explore a broader range of new ideas and approaches in my future filmic works.

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[258] The important difference between this aspect of *Nocturnal Synthesis* and *Timelines* is that in the latter, the various pieces were cut up and re-arranged by the overarching editing process, but they were still all played in full and the way the pieces looked and sounded was not altered, while in the former, the various pieces were completely changed by the overarching editing process.

[259] There are many ways that one could choose to categorise the films included in this portfolio. I am here simply using these two categories as an example to illustrate a structural and aesthetic relationship between my previous work and *Nocturnal Synthesis*.

[260] *Timelines* is also an example that fits into this methodological/aesthetic category, despite some of the durations between changes in materials being much longer than in my other works.

[261] *Dice Roll* is also an example that fits into this category, despite the image track being made up of more than one singular recording.

[262] This is by no means the only way one could group my past work into categories. For example, it would be equally valid to discuss how many of my films have a structure of independently made parts or segments, whereas others are made as one sequence. As *Nocturnal Synthesis* can be see to bridge the gap between my previous films, regardless of what way they are categorised, I have chosen to discuss only one such example in the main text.

Having developed my creative practice practically and philosophically in the manner I have laid out in this portfolio, the strength of its foundations will be of the utmost importance as I look ahead to my future audiovisual explorations and experimentations. In this way, the completion of *Nocturnal Synthesis* simultaneously marked two crucial stages: the conclusion of my research and the first step in the next stage of my experimental filmmaking practice.

As I reflect on the films I have made and the philosophy that informs (and is informed by) them, I find myself drawn to thoughts on freedom and the ways these ideas seem deeply ingrained in my approach to filmmaking:

Freedom for the sounds and images to exist in their own right, not being dependent on or unequal to other materials nor being used to communicate any ideas or represent any meaning, giving the resulting filmic art the liberty to emerge from these sounds and images. Freedom for the viewer-listener to construct their own unique and personal version of the film that emerges as their audiovisual experience, giving them the liberty to create filmic meaning for themselves. Freedom for myself as a filmmaker to reject the standard relationship of 'creator and creation' between an artist and their work, giving myself the liberty to experience my films as a viewer-listener.

I believe that freedom such as this is something worth striving for, and I hope to have done so through my embrace of experimentation and unknowable audiovisual results.

APPENDIX A:
FRAMERATES – Process Description

Note:

All random number generation outlined below was done using an original Max/MSP patch I made according to the requirements of this project's processes (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6). This patch was solely used to generate randomised lists of numbers that corresponded to the audio and visual material, which I then used as editing instructions while manually assembling the project in Final Cut Pro X.

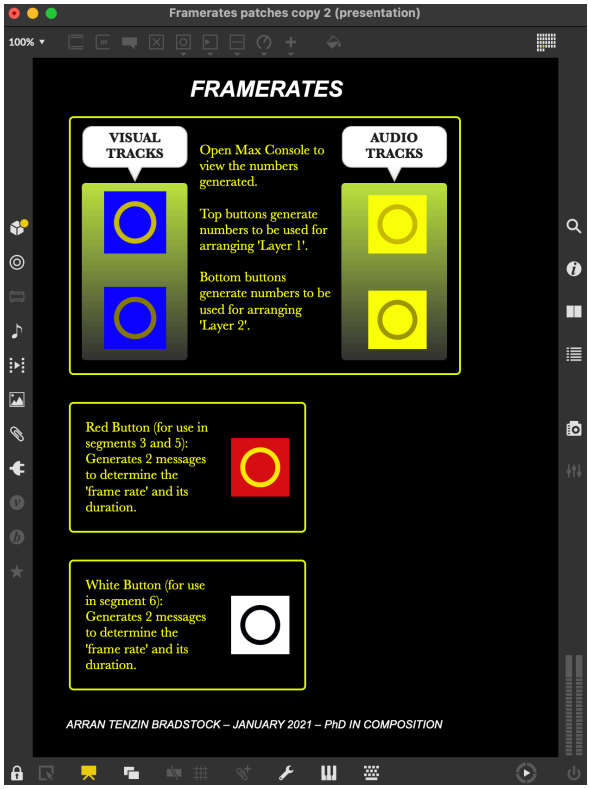


Fig. 5: Overview of the Max/MSP patch used in the making of *FRAMERATES*.

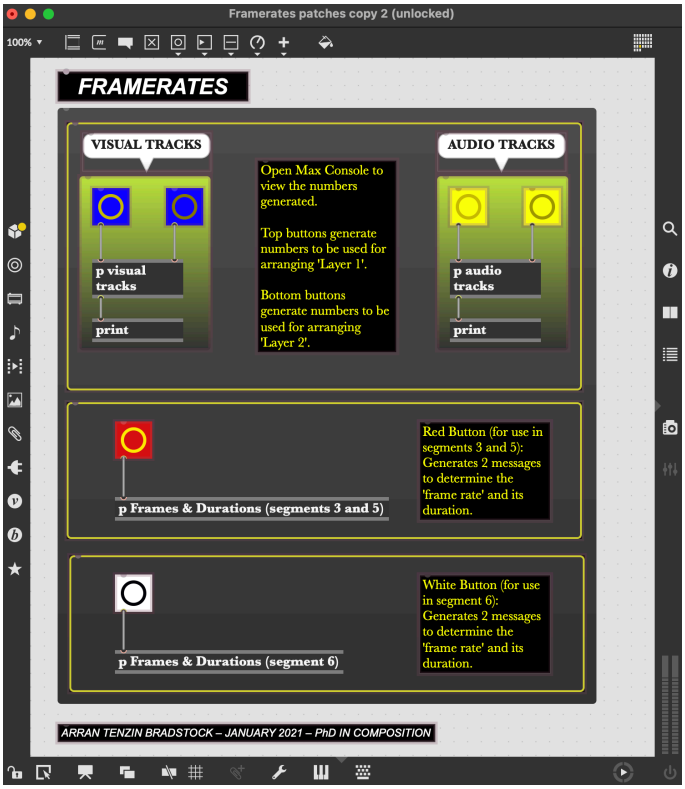


Fig. 6: The inner workings of the Max/MSP patch used in the making of *FRAMERATES*, showing the various 'sub-patches' being used for the different parts of the editing process.

Video Track Setup:

1. The Video Track of each segment in *FRAMERATES* consists of 2 separate sequences ('Video Sequence A' and 'Video Sequence B')
2. From the 55 video materials, randomly group them into 2 sets of 25 ('Video Set A') and 30 ('Video Set B').
3. The material of Video Set A is assigned to Video Sequence A, with Video Set B being assigned to Video Sequence B.
4. Generate randomised orderings for the materials of both Video Set A and Video Set B (the sub-patch seen in Fig. 7 is responsible for generating the numbers required for steps 2, 3, and 4).
5. Following the randomly generated orderings, arrange the materials in their respective Sequences by layering the clips in a vertical stack, the random order reflecting the vertical arrangement (i.e. 1st number in the ordering determines which clip is placed on the bottom of the stack, 2nd number determines which clip is placed directly above this, 3rd number determines which clip is placed directly above this, etc.).

- Video Sequence A now contains 25 X 1-minute-long video recordings arranged vertically as one layered stack according to the randomly generated ordering; Video Sequence B now contains 30 X 1-minute-long video recordings arranged vertically as one layered stack according to the randomly generated ordering.
- Video Sequence A and Video Sequence B are then each edited separately based on the specifications of the given process (see 'Segment Process Outlines' below).
- Video Sequence A and Video Sequence B are then brought together, with Video Sequence B being layered over Video Sequence A so that they are blended together to form the final Video Track for the given segment of *FRAMERATES*.

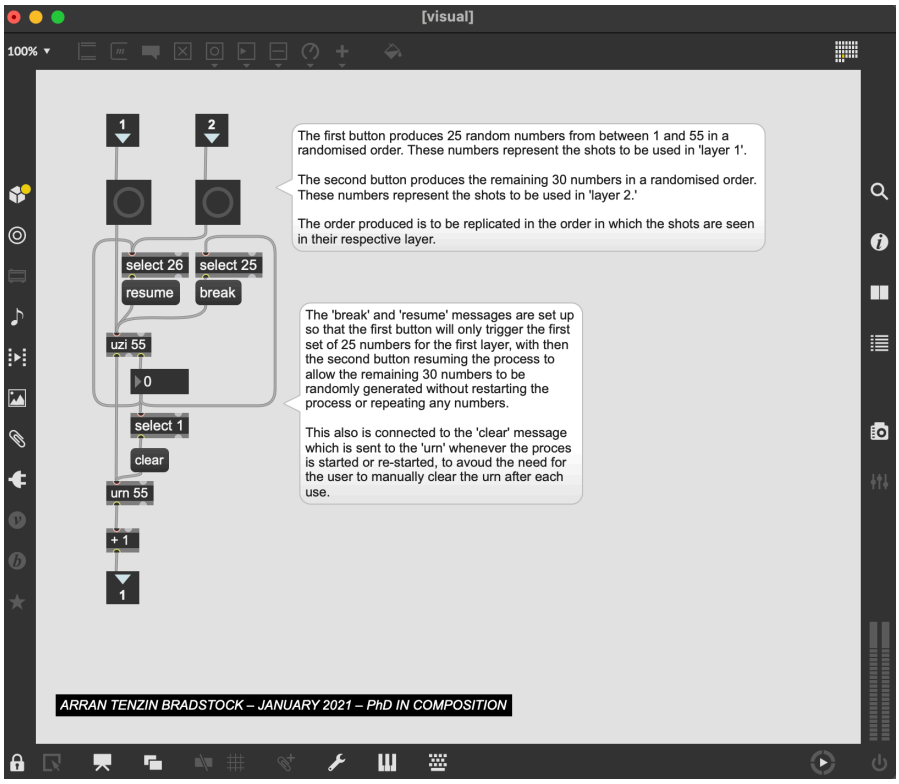


Fig. 7: The sub-patch used for determining the aspects of the video editing outlined in steps 2–4 above. A similar section of the patch was used for the audio editing, with the only difference being the numbers, due to the difference in recorded materials.

Audio Track Setup:

- The Audio Track of each segment in *FRAMERATES* is made according to the same steps outlined above, the only difference being the total number of materials: here, the 35 materials are randomly grouped into 2 sets of 15 ('Audio Set A') and 20 ('Audio Set B'), with the 2 sets being assigned to 'Audio Sequence A' and 'Audio Sequence B', respectively.

Segment Process Outlines:

The following processes describe how the materials were edited in each of the 2 video and 2 audio sequences for each *FRAMERATES* segment. In each sequence, only 1 piece of material is seen/heard at any one time. The order in which the materials are seen/heard is determined by the randomly generated vertical arrangement (i.e. first, the material on the bottom layer is seen/heard, then cut to the material directly above it, then cut to the material directly above that, etc.). All sequences are played back at a rate of 25 frames per second. Any additional randomisation instructions are generated in my above-mentioned Max/MSP patch.

Segment 1/6:

- In all 4 audio/video sequences, the material cuts after every single frame

Segment 2/6:

- In both video sequences, the material cuts after every 3 frames for the first 30 seconds and every 5 frames for the following 30 seconds.
- In both audio tracks, the material cuts after every 5 frames for the first 30 seconds and every 3 frames for the following 30 seconds.

Note: This introduces rhythmic variation between the video and audio tracks.

Segment 3/6:

- The number of frames that pass between cuts a) is randomly determined o be either every 1, 3 or 5 frames, and b) randomly changes every 1, 3 or 5 seconds, according to a set of randomly generated instructions.
- Example of instructions: "Cut every 3 frames for 3 seconds – Cut every 5 frames for 1 second – Cut every 1 frame for 5 seconds – Cut every 5 frames for 3 seconds – etc. " (instructions generated to fill the 60-second duration)
- 2 such sets of instructions are generated: one is applied to both video sequences, while the other is applied to both audio sequences.

Note: This introduces randomised rhythmic variation between the video and audio tracks.

Segment 4/6:

- In Video Sequence A, the material cuts every 1 frame for the first 30 seconds and every 3 frames for the following 30 seconds.
- In Video Sequence A, the material cuts every 3 frames for the first 30 seconds and every 5 frames for the following 30 seconds.
- In Audio Sequence A, the material cuts every 3 frames for the first 30 seconds and every 1 frame for the following 30 seconds.
- In Audio Sequence B, the material cuts every 5 frames for the first 30 seconds and every 3 frames for the following 30 seconds.

Note: This introduces rhythmic variation between the 2 video sequences and between the 2 audio sequences, as well as between video and audio tracks.

Segment 5/6:

- The same process as in *Segment 3/4*, where the number of frames that pass between cuts a) is randomly determined to be either every 1, 3 or 5 frames, and b) randomly changes every 1, 3 or 5 seconds, according to a set of randomly generated instructions.
- For this segment, 4 randomised sets of instructions are generated, one for each individual audio/video sequence.

Note: This randomises rhythmic variation between the 2 video sequences and between the 2 audio sequences, as well as between video and audio tracks.

Segment 6/6:

- This segment is 3 minutes in duration: the randomised ordering and determination of which set of materials (see Video Track Setup, steps 2–5 above) are generated 3 times, once per minute of duration.

- This process is based on the proceeding process for *Segment 5/6*, with the major difference being that this segment deals with cuts that are 1, 3 and 5 seconds as opposed to frames.
- The number of seconds that pass between cuts a) is randomly determined to be either every 1, 3 or 5 seconds, and b) randomly changes every 1, 3 or 5 seconds, according to a set of randomly generated instructions.
- Example of instructions: "Cut every 3 seconds for 3 seconds – Cut every 1 second for 5 seconds – Cut every 5 seconds for 5 seconds – etc. " (instructions generated to fill the 3-minute duration)
- There is also the potential for 2-second cuts to occur, e.g. if the instruction is to cut every 3 seconds for 5 seconds, as this would result in a 3-second cut and then a 2-second cut.

Note: With this segment, I wanted to experiment with the idea of applying the same structural process to materials of longer durations, being interested in the new perspective this would give the viewer-listener on both the recorded materials and the underlying compositional process. As was the case in *Segment 5/*6, this process randomises rhythmic variation between the 2 video sequences and between the 2 audio sequences, as well as between video and audio tracks.

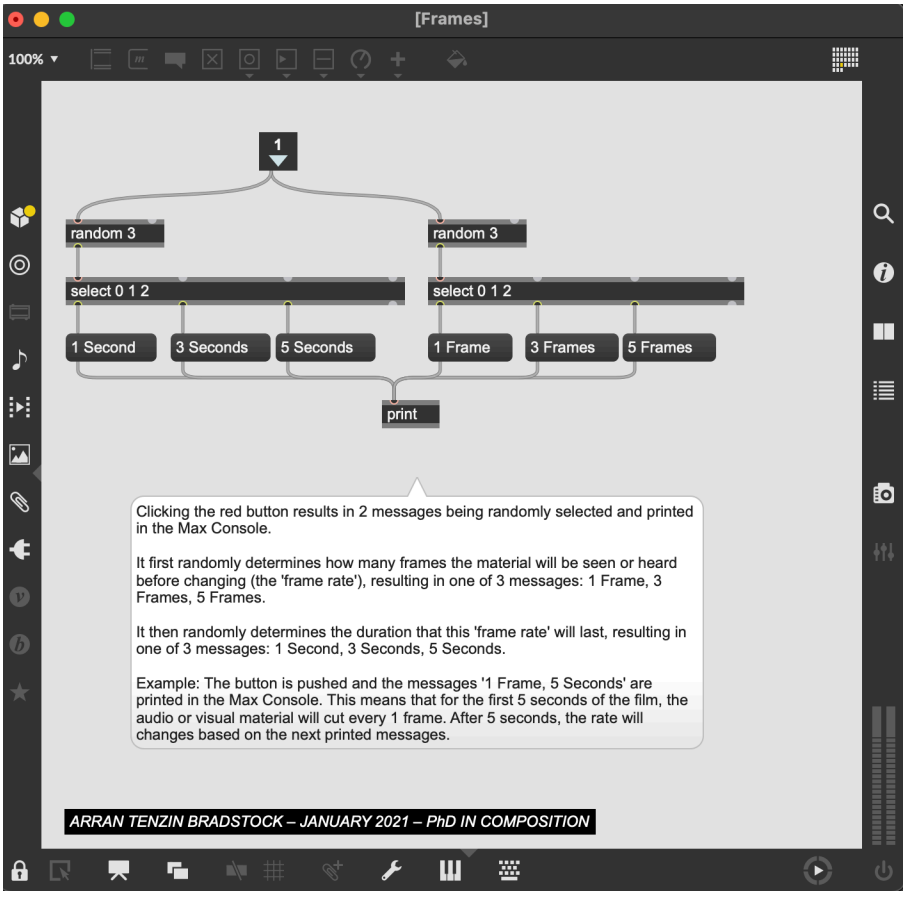


Fig. 8: The sub-patch used for Segment 3/6 and Segment 5/6. A similar section of the patch was used for Segment 6/6, with the only difference being the durations on the right hand side of the screen reflected the 1, 3, and 5 seconds of duration as opposed to frames.

APPENDIX B:
[SYNC] I & *[SYNC] II* – Process Description

[sync] I:

[sync] I was planned to have a duration of 180 seconds, made up of 40 shots with different set lengths to introduce rhythmic variety and the potential for more unpredictable sound/image overlaps (see Table 4). 2 orderings of these shots were randomly determined using an original Max/MSP patch to form 2 separate audiovisual tracks (see section below).

Shot Duration (seconds)	No. of Shots	Total Duration (seconds)
1s	X10	10s
4s	X15	60s
6s	X10	60s
10s	X5	50s
		Total = 180s

Table 4: Table of shot durations for the audiovisual material used in both *[sync] I* and *[sync]II.*

I then generated 2 series of editing instructions using the same Max/MSP patch, which dictated when only audio or visuals would be seen or heard in each track. The editing durations of these sound/image-only cuts differed from the shot lengths, and they were composed to ensure an equal number of sound or image-only cuts would occur (Table 5).

Edit Duration (seconds)	No. of Edits	No. of Sound-only/ Image-only Edits	Total Duration (seconds)
2s	X12	(6 sound, 6 image)	24s
3s	X10	(5 sound, 5 image)	30s
5s	X8	(4 sound, 4 image)	40s
7s	X6	(3 sound, 3 image)	42s
11s	X4	(2 sound, 2 image)	44s
			Total = 180s

Table 5: Table of sound-only and image-only editing durations for the editing process of *[sync] I.*

Once these instructions were applied to both tracks, they were combined. An interesting outcome of this process was that, in addition to not knowing in what way the audio or visual material would be combined, it was also unknown which material would be included at all, as there was the potential for the sound of some shots to be heard twice and therefore the visuals never be seen or the opposite. Repeating this process with the same shots would result in a very different film every time, not only rhythmically and structurally but also in terms of the material that would be included.

[sync] II:

The proce*ss* in *[sync] II* involved the same first step as above, with the 40 shots being randomly ordered twice to form 2 audiovisual tracks. These were placed back-to-back, and the audio tracks were swapped, with the second visual track being presented in black and white.

During the execution of this process, an interesting event occurred. In both randomised orderings, one of the 40 shots appeared at the exact same place, meaning that when the audio and visual tracks were swapped, the sound and image essentially stayed linked. I was aware of this potentially happening when developing the process, though it was a surprise given the statistical unlikelihood. Given that the shot in question does not feature any noticeable audiovisual sync point, coupled with the fact that the rest of the film is entirely asynchronous, it is likely that an audience would never be aware of this rare moment of synchronicity, which I feel is very much in line with the questions I wanted to explore with these films.

Note on Material Gathering:

I decided to gather the forty shots and sound recordings over one day while on two walks in the morning and at night. I did not plan any specific shots in advance; instead, I wanted to pass through different locations and record when I found the imagery and soundscape to both catch my attention. This approach was inspired by sound-walk pieces by sound artists such as Hildegard Westerkamp, though the final films do not present the material in this way.[263] I was also drawn to the idea of material captured on walks as this material, when viewed chronologically, would naturally contain a narrative of the journeys, something that would be disrupted and broken down by the subsequent randomised ordering.

Before the filming day, I deliberated on the question of whether the material needed to feature visible points of synchronisation, such as a door closing, a person speaking, etc. I ultimately decided no, as it does not matter if it appears to be in sync or not. While material with noticeable sync points would likely have directed an audience's attention more directly to the asynchronous nature of the films, my desire was not to craft a specific experience for an audience but to reflect philosophically on the nature of audiovisual synchronisation through my compositional process.

Max/MSP Patch:

The patch below in Fig. 9 generated editing instructions I used to edit the film manually.

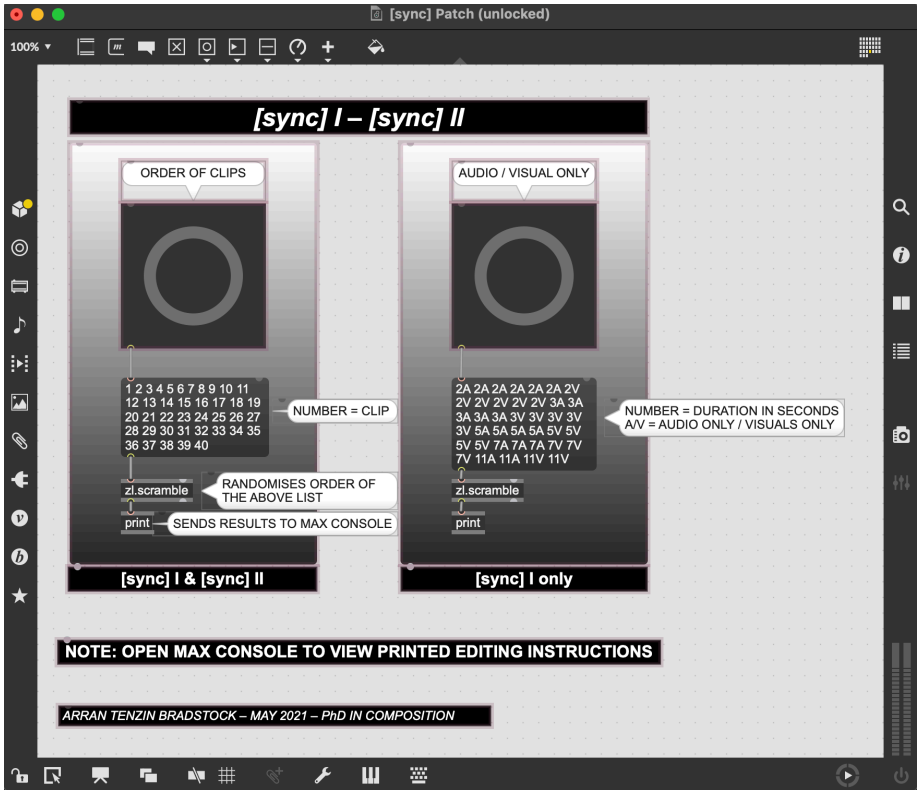


Fig. 9: Max/MSP patch for generating editing instructions for *[sync] I* and *[sync] II.*

[263] Hildegard Westerkamp, "Writings by Hildegard Westerkamp: Soundwalking," HildegardWesterkamp.ca, January 1, 2001, https://www.hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writingsby/?post_id=13&title=soundwalking.

APPENDIX C:
XENOBLAST – Process Description

Max and I both gathered 18 audio recordings and 18 video recordings, all 10 seconds in duration. Guidelines on how to approach this and technical requirements were provided in the text score, which included the instruction to label our recordings so our material could be matched based on corresponding titles (see Appendix D). I directed Max to pick 2 locations, one for audio recording and another for video recording, and treat the material gathering process as an 'exploration'.

My approach was inspired by the instruction-based scores of Fluxus 'events' and experimental music compositions, with a notable example being *in'ei*, a composition by Martin Iddon for the Quiet Music Ensemble.[264] This piece included both a text score with instructions for the performance and a separate accompanying note that was more poetic and philosophically engaging. I was impressed with how this managed to give an insight into the philosophy and conceptual thinking behind the piece while also supplying all the technical information required.

I felt a similar approach would greatly benefit *XENOBLAST,* and I chose to structure the score around two parts: 'Instructions & Technical Requirements' and 'Notes on Creative Approach'. I wanted Max and myself to be able to approach the material gathering in a way that would tap into our creative intuition, and I chose to focus the 'Notes' on the concept of exploration for this reason.

I edited my material into audio and video tracks separately, based on a set of rules I prepared (Fig. 10). I then took Max's materials, having not seen or heard them prior, and edited them exactly according to how I edited mine, using the corresponding recording numbers. This approach resulted in the improvised editing of my material, simultaneously functioning as the chance operation by which Max's material was edited.

I then combined the 2 video tracks by alternating between his and my material every time there was a cut, beginning with one of my recordings (the same was done with the audio tracks, beginning with one of

1. I can freely choose the order of the material.

2. The duration of each piece of material should be at least 3 seconds longer or shorter than the previous piece of material.

3. All material must be included at least once and no more than 3 times (This applies to the base layer only. There is no requirement or limit clips appearing when overlaying).

4. Every set of 4 recordings must include the following 4 editing techniques:
   1. Changing the speed (faster, slower, reverse)
   2. Changing the material itself (adding effects, colour grading, reverb/echo, etc.)
   3. Overlaying another piece of material (this overlaid material must share the same duration, but any additional changes can be made to it)
   4. Making no changes

5. Total Duration: 3 minutes

Fig. 10: Rules I followed while editing the audio and visual tracks.

Max's recordings). Every 5th cut, my material and Max's were either crossfaded or overlaid, alternating every 5 cuts. Finally, the resulting audio and visual tracks were combined. Because the sound and image edits each

[264] Martin Iddon, *in'ei*, pdf (2012), https://www.martiniddon.com/uploads/3/9/8/3/39836837/inei.pdf.

have different durations, different configurations of material naturally occur by chance (i.e. my visuals with my audio/Max's audio, Max's visuals with my audio/Max's audio (see Table 6 for an illustrated example of this process in operation).

| | | |

APPENDIX D:
***XENOBLAST* – Text Score & Notes on Creative Approach**

XENOBLAST

Film Text Score

by Arran Tenzin Bradstock

for Maximilian Le Cain

September 2021

XENOBLAST – Film Text Score

by Arran Tenzin Bradstock

for Maximilian Le Cain

XENOBLAST (2 definitions):
- A crystal in metamorphic rock that is not bounded by its own faces but has its outlines impressed upon it by neighbouring crystals.
- A metamorphic mineral that does not have characteristic mineral faces due to the conditions in which it grew.

(sources: *merriam-webster.com, yourdictionary.com*)

Instructions:

1. Gather 18 X 10-second audio and video recordings (18 X audio + 18 X video). While recordings of exactly 10 seconds are needed for the editing process, it is perfectly okay to supply slightly longer recordings (e.g. 15 seconds) as I can then trim them to the required durations.

2. Choose 2 locations/spaces to gather the material in (1 for audio gathering + 1 for video gathering). These should be separate, unrelated spaces.

3. Material should be gathered within one day (separate days for audio and visual material gathering). The order in which you approach this is entirely up to you.

4. Please rename the audio files A01–A18 (and the video files V01–V18) so that the numbers reflect the order in which they were recorded. The material can finally be sent via your preferred file-sharing service (e.g. WeTransfer, Google Drive, etc.).

   N.B. 1: Each piece of material gathered is to be treated individually and should function independently: you are not capturing material that needs to be combined to 'make sense' or 'work'.

   N.B. 2: The audio and visual material should not relate. Do not record audio of something/somewhere you recorded visuals (see instruction 2 above) or record sounds/images based on, or connected to, any other material. Treat the audio and visual material gathering sessions as separate, independent processes.

   N.B. 3: There is no limitation on equipment choice or how you approach using it (provided the 'Technical Requirements' listed below can be met). While you are free to use the equipment to gather material in a documentary fashion (i.e. clear, recognisable video/audio), this is not a requirement, and you may use any technical methods possible with your recording devices (including techniques that render the material unidentifiable or abstract).

Technical Requirements:

- Audio – Lossless file format (WAV / AIFF), 48khz sample rate preferable.

- Visuals – 25p, 1920x1080, 16:9 aspect ratio preferable.

Notes on Creative Approach:

Exploration

For me, to 'explore' a space means to immerse yourself in it, giving it all your focus in order to discover what it has to offer.

While you may initially be drawn to think of your role as 'material gatherer' or 'sound/image recordist', I invite you to view your role as that of 'explorer'. Similarly, I suggest approaching the task of gathering material not as a process of sound/image recording but instead as a process of exploration. We would expect the traditional explorer to utilise tools such as a compass or map to aid them and drive the exploration forward; I propose the idea of considering your audio/visual recording equipment as analogous to these tools. Instead of 'using' the equipment to 'record', consider letting your equipment guide you through the space. With this approach, the material gathered has the potential to be less a simple documentation of the space explored and can instead become a manifestation of the exploration itself.

The choice of location is entirely up to you. You may pick any space for any reason (including no reason). To assist in this decision, consider locations based on the potential you feel they have for exploration. Once a space has been chosen to explore, you are free to approach the gathering of material in any way, using any techniques or methods that you deem fit. It may be beneficial to bear in mind the way in which the qualities of the space itself can impact and shape the material gathering, and thus, it is advisable to remain open to the location and what it has to offer. I would also note that while an unfamiliar location may seem to be a most suitable site for exploration, there is also potential for discovery in places you already feel attuned to.

Throughout the process, I advocate that you allow your creative intuition to guide the exploration and gathering of material. Where possible, consider limiting the influence of analytical or logical thought on your decisions, instead giving more credence to momentary creative insights and your 'in the moment' response to your surroundings. Many people could explore the same location and make remarkably different discoveries. As such, you are not required to attempt to reveal everything the location has to offer. By leaning into your personal experience, you have the ability to uncover insights unique to *you*. The resulting material will be shaped by your creative intuition just as much as by the space in which it was recorded.

APPENDIX E:
AUDIOVISUALS – Notes on Approach

Notes on the Process:

The first stage in the process was to gather 30 audio and 30 video recordings. All of these materials were to be what I thought of as 'concrete' or 'non-abstract,' in that, they were easily identifiable and not made obscure through the recording process (instead of using camera settings to dramatically alter the image during recording or recording ambiguous subjects).

I outlined 6 categories (Interesting, Boring, Indoor, Outdoor, Micro, Macro) that would shape and direct my mindset and approach while gathering the material. I recorded 5 X 4-second recordings for each category (5 audio & 5 video). I saw this as a continuation of my experiments in *XENOBLAST*, in which my text score outlined detailed guidelines on how to approach the material gathering without giving specific instructions on what material to record.

'Interesting/Boring' were subjective categories that allowed me to engage my personal intuition and required me to consider the qualities of the subjects being recorded. 'Indoor/Outdoor' focused me on location and space, and while seemingly less interpretive categories, it was left very open as to the content of the material recorded. 'Micro/Macro' encouraged me to be more observational and gave specific details about the material itself. Still, it was up to me to decide both how far to interpret this and what to record.

The editing processes of the 6 mini films/segments entailed applying different kinds of manipulations to the materials in different combinations, with each segment focusing on a specific conceptual approach (see Appendix F).

I wanted to experiment with editing on different 'layers.' By this, I mean that instead of simply ordering the material and applying manipulation to the recordings, the durations of the manipulations were determined separately from the material durations. This led to the editing being based on a concept of 'durational blocks,' both for the audio and visual materials and for the manipulations (see figures in Appendix F). This approach allowed the rhythm of both the material and the manipulations to form freely and independently. It shifted my perspective from considering the manipulations as effects applied to sounds and images to seeing the manipulations as equally important materials in their own right.

Regarding these manipulations, one of my central considerations for the process was to explore different ways of rendering audio and visual material abstract. In preparation for this project, my thoughts were focused on the nature of abstraction and the various 'levels' of abstraction that can occur to material due to the combination of different methods of manipulation and the qualities of the material itself. This ranges from material that appears familiar, but the identity is uncertain, to the artificial and more overtly abstract. I was less interested in any specific form or conception of what makes material 'abstract' and more interested in the interplay between material left as it was recorded and material displaying some level of abstraction. To this end, I planned 10 methods of manipulation (separate methods for the audio and visual recordings) that would produce a range of results depending not only on the method but also on how said method interacted with whatever material it was imposed on (see Appendix F).

On this note, I am brought to another central aspect of the process: the different combinations of abstract and non-abstract images and sounds within the audiovisuals. For example, the distinction between audiovisuals with both non-abstract sounds and images vs those with abstract sounds and non-abstract images or any other configuration. This line of thinking led to my decision for this project to take the form of 6 mini films, with each segment focused on a different configuration. I think of these different configurations as showcasing a like:like or like:unlike relationship, with both sounds and images being either abstract or non-abstract being examples of the former and having only sounds or images being abstract being an example of the latter.

APPENDIX F:
AUDIOVISUALS – Process Description

Note on Editing Instructions:

All randomisation described in the process outlined below was achieved by generating instructions from an original Max/MSP patch that I used as editing instructions to edit the materials in Final Cut X manually, see Fig. 11 and Fig. 12.



Fig. 11: Presentation mode of the Max/MSP patch.

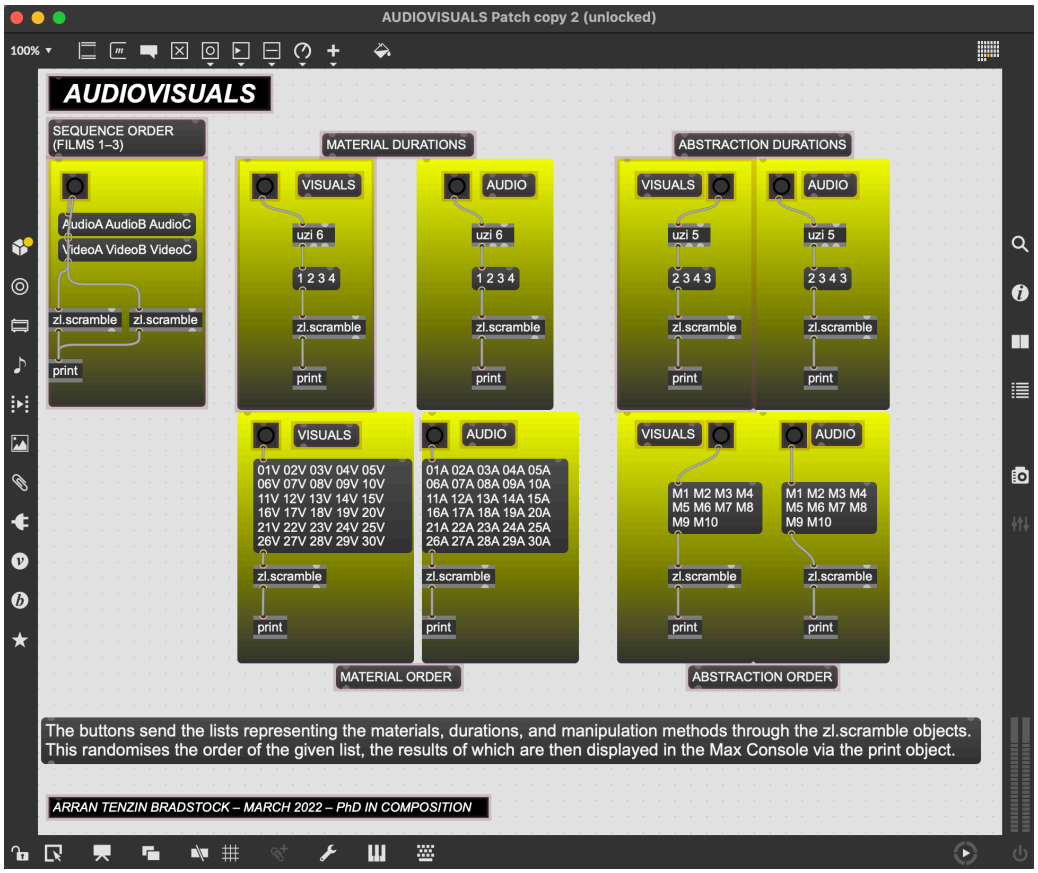


Fig. 12: Inner workings of the Max/MSP patch. The button objects when activated send the lists representing the materials, durations and manipulation methods through the zl.scramble objects. This randomises the order of the given list. The results are displayed in the Max Console via the print object.

- Gather 30 visual recordings and 30 audio recordings
- Each recording is to be 4 seconds in duration
- Gather 5 pieces of audio and visual material for each of the below categories:

1. Boring
2. Interesting
3. Indoor
4. Outdoor
5. Micro
6. Macro

- Number the material 01A–30A (audio) and 01V–30V (visuals).
  N.B. All material must be concrete/non-abstract.

STAGE 2: Editing Processes

Step 1: Material Selection, Ordering and Durations (mini films 2, 4, 5 & 6)

1. Arbitrarily/Intuitively Select (& therefore Order) 4 orderings of 12 materials (3 audio & 3 video sequences) for every other durational block for visuals and 2nd block for audio and visuals (alternate so the 1st duration of visuals is chosen, but the 2nd audio is chosen so the two chosen materials don't start in sync), leaving one blank space between each choice. No material is to be chosen more than once during this stage.
   – This step is to be carried out for all mini-films 2, 4 and 5 before moving on so that the random determinations do not affect my decisions. The corresponding mini film to which each sequence (AudioA–C, VideoA–C) is applied is randomly determined before moving on.
   – Mini-film 6 is also done at this stage, but as it has a unique duration, no randomness is applied in this step. For film 6 (36 chosen materials), materials can be repeated once at this stage.
   – For mini films 1 & 2, the entire ordering is randomly generated as it is known to me, which will be abstracted due to the shape of the process.
2. Randomly determine the 'shape' of the audio and visual sequences of duration blocks of lengths 1, 2, 3 and 4 seconds. Each 10-second duration will use all 4 blocks, each time randomly ordered (24 blocks per 60 seconds), resulting in 2 separate random sequences, one for the audio track and one for the visual track. Apply these durations to the material sequences from step 1.1.
3. Randomly Select (& therefore, order) the material for the remaining half of blocks (12) using a scrambled list of all 30 materials. The first 12 materials in this scrambled list are chosen. Materials are allowed to be repeated once. (36 chosen for film 4 from 2 scrambled lists, the full 1st list and the first 6 from the second used). (This does not apply to 1 & 2, which are already fully determined from step 1.1)

Repeat the above 3 steps for mini films 2, 4, 5 & 6, the only deviation being that films 2, 4 & 5 are 1 minute in duration whereas mini film 6 lasts 3 minutes.

Grey = intuitively chosen, White = randomly chosen
Top layer = visual track, bottom later = audio track
Size of cells = duration



Step 2: Abstraction

- For each mini-film, a different process determines when methods of abstraction are applied to the audio and/or visual tracks and which methods are used in each instance.

Methods of Abstraction:

4 durational blocks per 12 seconds
= 20 blocks per 60 second
= 10 abstractions per 60 seconds

Video:

1. Extreme brightness, master exposure 99%
2. Extreme darkness, master exposure -99%
3. Blur effect, 'gaussian' 100%
4. Blur and tiling, 'tile' 17.55 + 'gaussian' 10%
5. Increase grain, 'hard noise' effect X2: monochrome, hard light, white noise (bright static)
6. Increase grain, 'hard noise' effect X2: monochrome, hard light, white noise & monochrome, hard light, TV static (dark static)
7. Zoom X-axis 400%
8. Zoom Y-axis 400%
9. distort + zoom, '360 soft focus'
10. distort + zoom, '360 unsharp mask'

Audio:

1. EQ – Bassy – 'Muffled' Next Door Style B, 75.0
2. EQ – Tinny –'AUHipass'
3. Distortion – 'AUDistortion' Multi Decimated 2
4. Distortion – 'Phase Distortion' Extreme Distortion
5. Layering – Layer the last durational block that had no effect applied
6. Layering – Layer the last durational block that had an effect applied
7. Delay – 'AUDelay,' delay time 0.1, Feedback 90.0
8. Delay – 'Modulation Delay,' Long Tunnel Reflection
9. Reverb – 'Space Designer,' Upper Echelons
10. Reverb – 'Space Designer,' Forest Echo Dark, fully dry

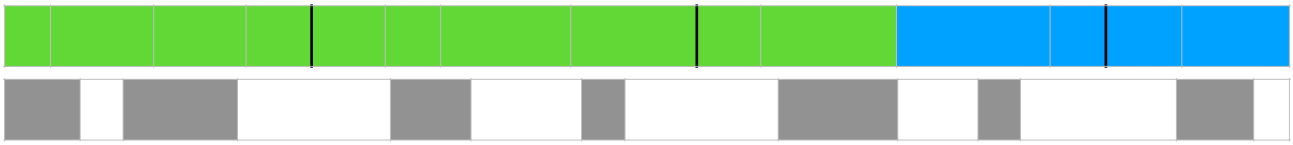
- *Segment 1/6*: 60 seconds
  Exploring the configurations where the audiovisuals showcase a like:like relationship, i.e. manipulation occurs, or does not occur, to both audio and visual tracks simultaneously. In this process, for the first 30 seconds, all audio and visual material are rendered abstract, and for the second 30 seconds, all material is left concrete.

  1. Randomly determine the "shape" of the abstraction/concrete made up of duration blocks of lengths 2, 3, 4, and 3 seconds. Every 12 seconds features these four durations; the list scrambled each repetition (2 random sequences to be applied to both audio and visual tracks separately). [20 blocks total. First 10 blocks abstract].
  2. Randomly determine which method (M) to use for each abstraction. Scramble the list containing the 10 methods to determine the sequential order. Repeat for audio and visuals separately.

3. Apply the sequence to the material so that the first 30 seconds are all abstract.

Green = manipulated (abstract), blue = unchanged (concrete)

Video:



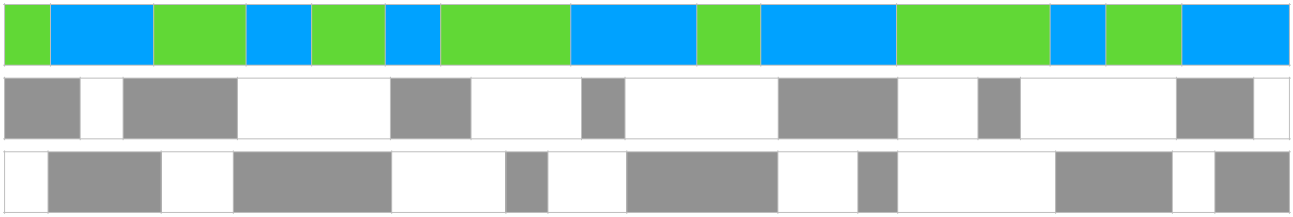
Audio:



- *Segment 2/6*: 60 seconds
  Exploring the configurations where the audiovisuals showcase a like:like relationship, i.e. manipulation occurs, or does not occur, to both audio and visual tracks simultaneously. In this process, the occurrence and non-occurrence of the manipulations alternate throughout the edit.

  1. Randomly determine the "shape" of the abstraction/concrete made up of duration blocks of lengths 2, 3, 4, 3 seconds. Every 12 seconds features these 4 durations; the list scrambled each repetition (1 random sequence to be applied to both audio and visual tracks) [20 blocks total. 10 blocks abstract].
  2. Randomly determine which method (M) to use for each abstraction. Scramble the list containing the 10 methods to determine the sequential order. Repeat for audio and visuals separately.
  3. Apply the sequence to the material so that every 2nd block is concrete.

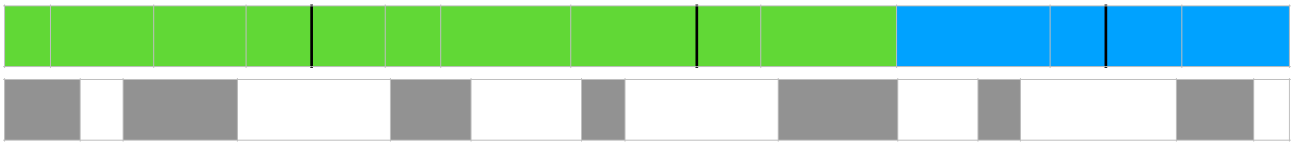
  Green = manipulated (abstract), blue = unchanged (concrete)



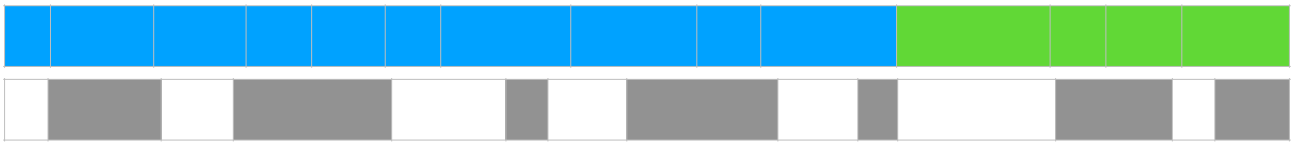
- *Segment 3/6*: 60 seconds
  Exploring the configurations where the audiovisuals showcase a like:unlike relationship, i.e. manipulation occurs to only the audio or visual track at any time. In this process, for the first 30 seconds, only visual material is rendered abstract, and the inverse for the second 30 seconds.
  1. Randomly determine the "shape" of the abstraction/concrete made up of duration blocks of lengths 2, 3, 4, 3 seconds. Every 12 seconds features these 4 durations; the list scrambled each repetition (2 random sequences to be applied to both audio and visual tracks separately). [20 blocks total].
  2. Randomly determine which method (M) to use for each abstraction. Scramble the list containing the 10 methods to determine the sequential order. Repeat for audio and visuals separately.
  3. Apply the sequence to the material so that the first 30 seconds of visuals are abstract. The inverse is applied to the audio.

  Green = manipulated (abstract), blue = unchanged (concrete)

Video:



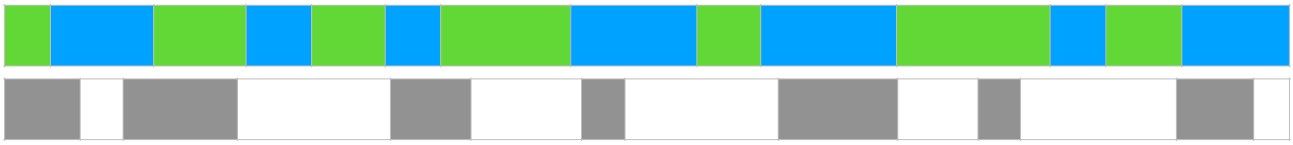
Audio:



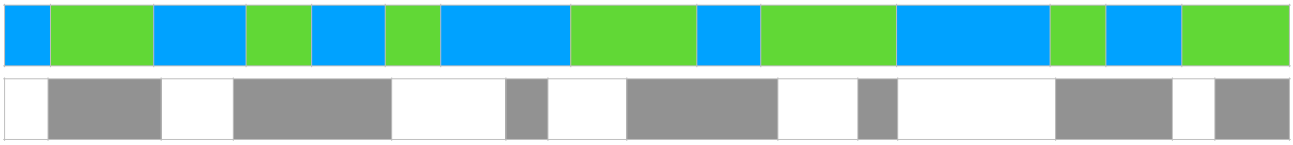
- *Segment 4/6*: 60 seconds
  Exploring the configurations where the audiovisuals showcase a like:unlike relationship, i.e. manipulation occurs to only the audio or visual track at any time. In this process, the occurrence and non-occurrence of the manipulations alternates throughout the edit.
  1. Randomly determine the "shape" of the abstraction/concrete made up of duration blocks of lengths 2, 3, 4, and 3 seconds. Every 12 seconds features these four durations, the list scrambled each repetition (1 random sequence to be applied to both audio and visual tracks). [20 blocks total. 10 blocks abstract].
  2. Randomly determine which method (M) to use for each abstraction. Scramble the list containing the 10 methods to determine the sequential order. Repeat for audio and visuals separately.
  3. Apply the sequence to the material so that every 2nd block is concrete in the visuals and that the inverse is applied to the audio.

  Green = manipulated (abstract), blue = unchanged (concrete)

Video:



Audio:

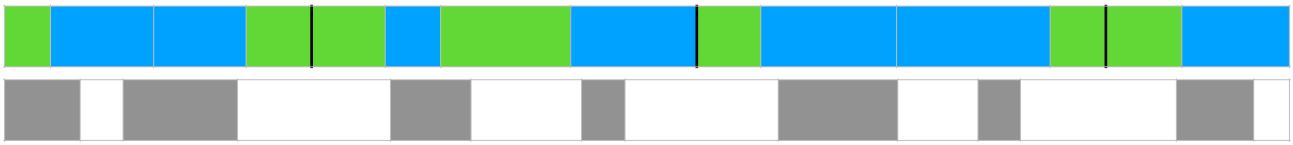


- *Segment 5/6*: 60 seconds
  Exploring the configurations where the audiovisuals showcase an alternation between like:like and like:unlike relationships.

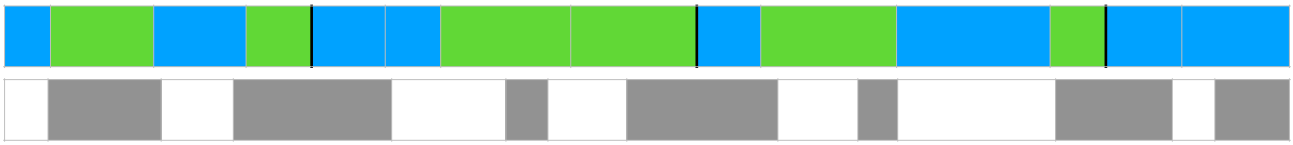
  1. Randomly determine the "shape" of the abstraction/concrete made up of duration blocks of lengths 2, 3, 4, and 3 seconds. Every 12 seconds features these 4 durations; the list scrambled each repetition (1 random sequence to be applied to both audio and visual tracks).
  2. The durational blocks, as applied to visuals, take on the following pattern (C= concrete, A+ abstract): A-C-C-A-A-C-A-C (repeat), the audio following: C-A-C-A-C-C-A-A (repeat)
  (N.B the patterns are the same, just audio pattern is shifted 3 blocks forward)
  3. Randomly determine which method (M) to use for each abstraction. Scramble the list containing the 10 methods to determine the sequential order. Repeat for audio and visuals separately.
  4. Apply the sequence to the material.

Green = manipulated (abstract), blue = unchanged (concrete)

Video: A-C-C-A-A-C-A-C (repeat)



Audio: C-A-C-A-C-C-A-A (repeat)



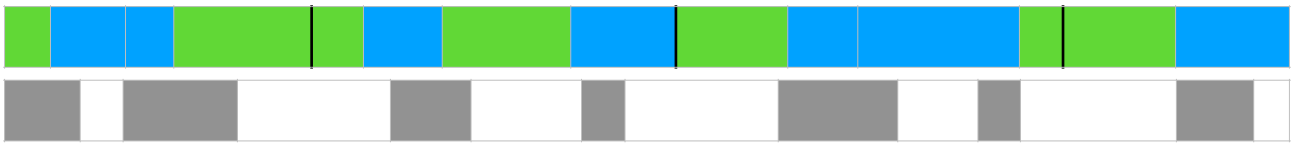
(N.B the patterns are the same; the audio pattern is shifted 3 blocks forward)

- *Segment 6/6*: 180 seconds
  Exploring the configurations where the audiovisuals showcase an alternation between like:like and like:unlike relationships. Furthermore, the durations of the manipulations are no longer shared by both the audio and visual tracks, allowing for the alternation of the relationships to occur more freely, and with overlaps, the line between the two is made more blurred.

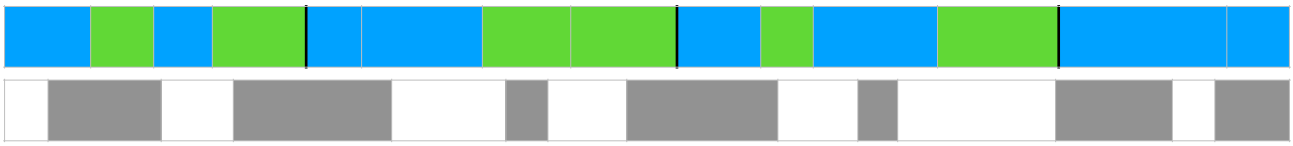
  1. Randomly determine the "shape" of the abstraction/concrete made up of duration blocks of lengths 2, 3, 4, and 3 seconds. Every 12 seconds features these 4 durations; the list scrambled each repetition (2 random sequences to be applied to both audio and visual tracks separately).
  2. The durational blocks, as applied to visuals, take on the following pattern (C= concrete, A+ abstract): A-C-C-A-A-C-A-C (repeat), the audio following: C-A-C-A-C-C-A-A (repeat)
  (N.B the patterns are the same, just audio pattern is shifted 3 blocks forward)
  3. Randomly determine which method (M) to use for each abstraction. Scramble the list containing the 10 methods 3 times to determine the sequential order. Repeat for audio and visuals separately.
  4. Apply the sequences to the material.

  Green = manipulated (abstract), blue = unchanged (concrete)

Video: A-C-C-A-A-C-A-C (repeat)



Audio: C-A-C-A-C-C-A-A (repeat)



APPENDIX G:
TIMELINES – Annotated Images of the Editing Process

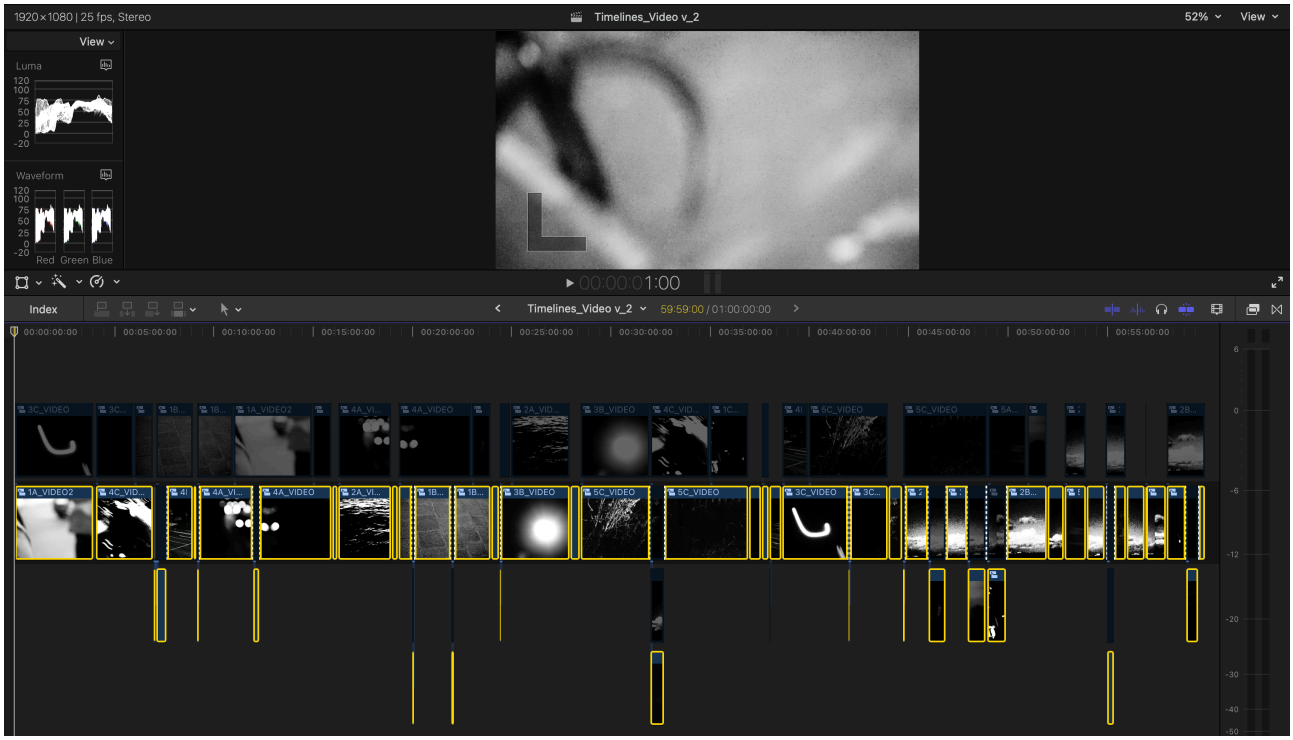


Fig. 13: The final video editing timeline. The segments with a yellow boarder are the segments seen in the final film. The Alternative Timeline can be seen on the top layer, with the Base Timeline directly underneath. The other small segments below this are segments that have been re-arranged due to the knock-on effects caused by the process.

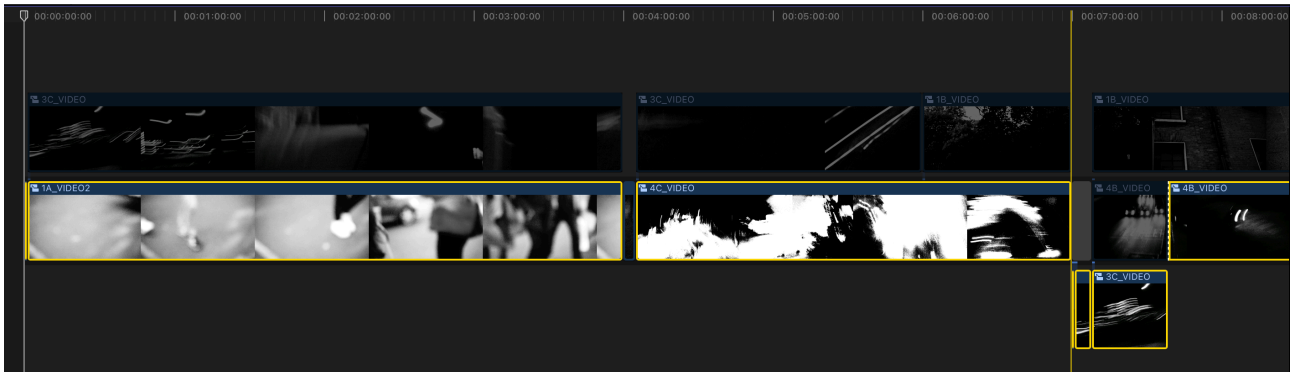


Fig. 14: Detail of the final video editing timeline showing the first 8 minutes.

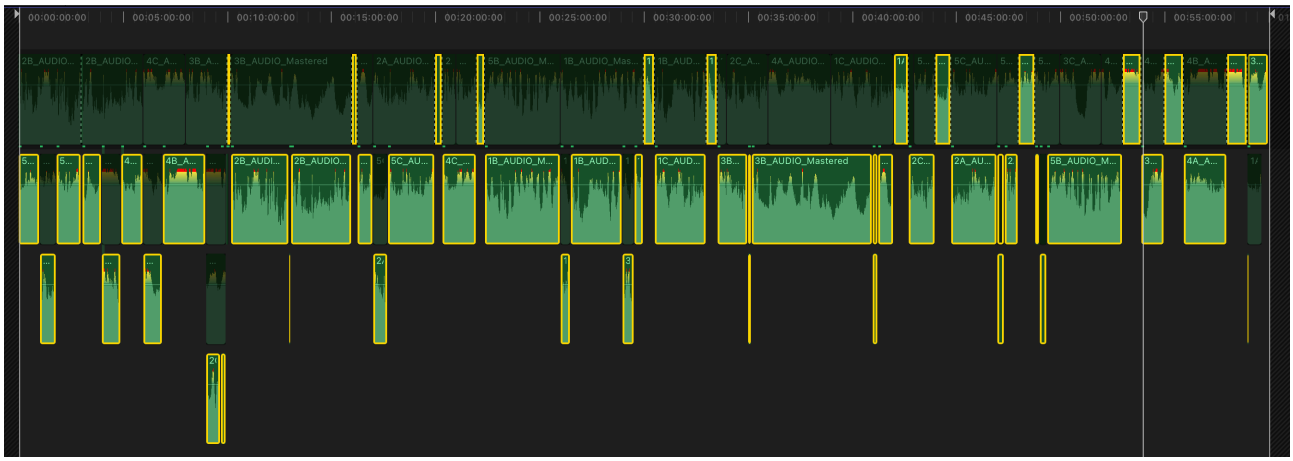


Fig. 15: The final audio editing timeline. The segments with a yellow boarder are the segments heard in the final film. The Alternative Timeline can be seen on the top layer, with the Base Timeline directly underneath. The other small segments below this are segments that have been re-arranged due to the knock-on effects caused by the process.

APPENDIX H:
***TIMELINES* – Description of the 15 Audio and 15 Video Pieces**

Note:

My goal was to experiment with an approach to composition that would result in the audio and video pieces being completed before ever entering the audio and visual editing programs (e.g., Final Cut Pro or Logic Pro), where I typically create the final works. This goal informed my creative structuring of the process that ensured the pieces were produced entirely within the camera for video and within the Emergence programme for audio.

For a visual aid to the below descriptions, see Appendix I.

***Timelines:* Audio/Video Process Description**

The following system applies to both audio and video pieces:

- 15 pieces in total (1A, 1B, 1C, 2A…5B, 5C), each consisting of a single continuous piece of recorded material of varying duration.
- Each piece embodies a different relationship between the subject/source and the material processing.
- Each piece explores different levels of 'manipulation' and 'abstraction' in varying configurations.
- The 15 pieces are divided into 5 categories: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.
- Each category is further subdivided into 3 sub-categories: A, B, C.
- The category determines the recording location, the source type, and the material processing.
- The sub-category determines the 'level of manipulation', the 'level of abstraction', and the duration for each piece.
- The combined durations of every set of 3 pieces in each category add up to 12 minutes (12 X 5 = 60 minutes total runtime).

The following points apply to the video material only:

- All video pieces explore the relationship between visual phenomena and how they are recorded and processed.
- There is a particular focus on the 'shutter speed' and the relation between this and the degree of movement (both in the visual subject and the recording equipment).
- Locations & Sources: the image sources were divided into 2 types, 'static' and 'dynamic'. Static here refers to visual stimuli that are not in motion (e.g., landscapes), with dynamic referring to sources that feature something in motion (e.g., crowded spaces). 5 locations were chosen and assigned to the 5 categories based on whether the resulting material captured would be static or dynamic.
- Processing: the processing was divided into 2 types, 'slow' and 'fast' shutter speeds (1/4 or 1/8000, respectively). Each of the 5 categories was then assigned either a 'slow' or 'fast' shutter speed based on the relationship between the slow/fast processing and the static/dynamic sources.
- Manipulation: manipulation here refers to the camera's movement while recording. Each piece was assigned a level of manipulation based on its sub-category (A=Light, B=Moderate, C=Heavy). The exception to this was category 5, the 3 pieces of which were recorded without any manipulation.
- Taking together the above 3 points of source, processing and material together, the 5 categories are structured as follows:

Category 1: Dynamic Source, Fast Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 2: Static Source, Fast Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 3: Static Source, Slow Processing (varying manipulation)

Category 4: Dynamic Source, Slow Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 5: Dynamic Source, Slow Processing (no manipulation)

- Abstraction: abstraction here refers to additional visual processing measures taking place in-camera that affect the degree to which the resulting imagery is recognisable/natural. Ways of introducing abstraction included adjusting the focus and exposure settings and recording while using different 'picture effect' settings such as 'high-contrast mode'. For each category, the 3 pieces were randomly assigned a level of abstraction (Low, Medium, High).

The following points apply to the audio material only:

- All the audio pieces explore the relationship between auditory phenomena and how they are recorded and processed using granular techniques within the 'Emergence' audio software.
- There is a particular focus on the individual 'audio grains' and the relation between their length and the density of the sound (both in the source and in the processed recording).
- Locations & Sources: the audio sources were divided into 2 types, 'sparse' and 'dense'. Sparse here refers to audio stimuli that are infrequent or subtle (e.g., deserted areas), while dense refers to sources that feature continuous activity (e.g., busy spaces). 5 locations were chosen and assigned to the 5 categories based on whether the resulting material captured would be static or dynamic.
- Processing: the processing was divided into 2 types, 'short' and 'long' buffer lengths (40ms or 500ms, respectively). Each of the 5 categories was then assigned either 'short' or 'long' buffer lengths based on the relationship between the short/long processing and the sparse/dense sources.
- Manipulation: the manipulation here refers to changing the grain lengths and how often new grains are started during playback. Each piece was assigned a level of manipulation based on its sub-category (A=Light, B=Moderate, C=Heavy). The exception was category 5, the 3 pieces of which did not undergo any manipulation.

Taking together the above 3 points of source, processing and material together, the 5 categories are structured as follows:
Category 1: Dense Source, Short Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 2: Sparse Source, Short Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 3: Sparse Source, Long Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 4: Dense Source, Long Processing (varying manipulation)
Category 5: Dense Source, Long Processing (no manipulation)

- Abstraction: abstraction here refers to additional processing measures taking place in Emergence that affect the degree to which the resulting sounds are recognisable/natural. Ways of introducing abstraction included adjusting the 'pitch', 'reverse' and 'increment' settings of the preset. For each category, the 3 pieces were randomly assigned a level of abstraction (Low, Medium, High).

APPENDIX I:

TIMELINES – Process Tables

VIDEO
SUBJECT CHOICE (LOCATION)
MATERIAL: IMAGE SOURCE **[15 of these]** (**static** or **dynamic**)
SONY A7 CAMERA (fixed frame rate: 25 frames per second)
MATERIAL PROCESSING (Shutter speed: **fast** or **slow**) [1/4 or 1/8000]
MANIPULATION (**Static** or **Moving** Camera)
LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION: **LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH** (Focus, Exposure, Picture Effect)

Table 7: The system/process guiding the 15 video pieces.

AUDIO
SUBJECT CHOICE (LOCATION)
MATERIAL: SOUND SOURCE **[15 of these]** (**sparse** or **dense**)
MARANTZ AUDIO RECORDER (fixed sample rate: 48,000 samples per second)
EMERGENCE VST
MATERIAL PROCESSING (Buffer size: **short** or **long**) [40.00ms or 500.00ms]
MANIPULATION (**Set** or **Changing**: Time, Grain Length)
LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION: **LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH** (Pitch, Reverse, Increment)

Table 8: The system/process guiding the 15 audio pieces.

VIDEO

CATEGORY + SUBCATEGORY	LOCATION	SOURCE TYPE	PROCESSING	DEGREE OF MANIPULATION	LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION	DURATION
1A	CITY CENTRE	DYNAMIC	FAST SHUTTER	LIGHT	MEDIUM	4 MINS
1B	CITY CENTRE	DYNAMIC	FAST SHUTTER	MODERATE	LOW	5 MINS
1C	CITY CENTRE	DYNAMIC	FAST SHUTTER	HEAVY	HIGH	3 MINS
2A	BLACKROCK BAY	STATIC	FAST SHUTTER	LIGHT	HIGH	3 MINS
2B	BLACKROCK BAY	STATIC	FAST SHUTTER	MODERATE	MEDIUM	8 MINS
2C	BLACKROCK BAY	STATIC	FAST SHUTTER	HEAVY	LOW	1 MINS
3A	UCD WOODS	STATIC	SLOW SHUTTER	LIGHT	LOW	2 MINS
3B	UCD WOODS	STATIC	SLOW SHUTTER	MODERATE	HIGH	4 MINS
3C	UCD WOODS	STATIC	SLOW SHUTTER	HEAVY	MEDIUM	6 MINS
4A	ROAD OVERPASS	DYNAMIC	SLOW SHUTTER	LIGHT	HIGH	7 MINS
4B	ROAD OVERPASS	DYNAMIC	SLOW SHUTTER	MODERATE	LOW	2 MINS
4C	ROAD OVERPASS	DYNAMIC	SLOW SHUTTER	HEAVY	MEDIUM	3 MINS
5A	TRAIN	DYNAMIC	SLOW SHUTTER	N/A	LOW	2 MINS
5B	TRAIN	DYNAMIC	SLOW SHUTTER	N/A	HIGH	1 MINS
5C	TRAIN	DYNAMIC	SLOW SHUTTER	N/A	MEDIUM	9 MINS

Table 9: Table of the 15 video pieces.

AUDIO

CATEGORY + SUBCATEGORY	LOCATION	SOURCE TYPE	PROCESSING	DEGREE OF MANIPULATION	LEVEL OF ABSTRACTION	DURATION
1A	LUAS	DENSE	SHORT BUFFER	LIGHT	LOW	1 MINS
1B	LUAS	DENSE	SHORT BUFFER	MODERATE	HIGH	8 MINS
1C	LUAS	DENSE	SHORT BUFFER	HEAVY	MEDIUM	3 MINS
2A	DART TRACKS	SPARSE	SHORT BUFFER	LIGHT	LOW	4 MINS
2B	DART TRACKS	SPARSE	SHORT BUFFER	MODERATE	HIGH	6 MINS
2C	DART TRACKS	SPARSE	SHORT BUFFER	HEAVY	MEDIUM	2 MINS
3A	SECRET LAKE	SPARSE	LONG BUFFER	LIGHT	HIGH	1 MINS
3B	SECRET LAKE	SPARSE	LONG BUFFER	MODERATE	LOW	9 MINS
3C	SECRET LAKE	SPARSE	LONG BUFFER	HEAVY	MEDIUM	2 MINS
4A	HEUSTON	DENSE	LONG BUFFER	LIGHT	LOW	3 MINS
4B	HEUSTON	DENSE	LONG BUFFER	MODERATE	MEDIUM	7 MINS
4C	HEUSTON	DENSE	LONG BUFFER	HEAVY	HIGH	2 MINS
5A	CONSTRUCTION	DENSE	LONG BUFFER	N/A	HIGH	3 MINS
5B	CONSTRUCTION	DENSE	LONG BUFFER	N/A	LOW	5 MINS
5C	CONSTRUCTION	DENSE	LONG BUFFER	N/A	MEDIUM	4 MINS

Table 10: Table of the 15 audio pieces.

APPENDIX J:
***NOCTURNAL SYNTHESIS* – Process Description**

***Nocturnal Synthesis:* Compositional Process Description**

- A set of separately made audio and visual pieces that continually crossfade in a randomised order.
- 6 audio and 6 video pieces, all 6 minutes in duration and all made according to a shared compositional process (see the section below 'Audio/Video Process Description').
- The 6 pieces are presented across 2 overlapping layers so that they fade into each other (see table below).
- The structure ensures that 3 pieces are presented at all times, alternating between 2 audio/1 video, and 1 audio/2 video (see Tables 11–12).
- The order of the pieces is randomly determined.
- It is randomly determined which of the 2 above configurations is used for the audio and video tracks.
- Key to Tables 11–12 below:
  6 X 6-minute pieces (order to be randomised).
  Each Cell = 2 mins.
  Total = 24 mins.
  Each Row =
  Cell Number = Different pieces (e.g., 1V = Video Piece 1, 3A = Audio Piece 3, etc.).
  Yellow = Fade IN.
  Pink = No crossfading.
  Blue = Fade OUT.
  Black = Blank gap.

Video:

Video Layer 1	**6V**		**2V**	**2V**	**2V**		**4V**	**4V**	**4V**		**6V**	**6V**
Video Layer 2	**1V**	**1V**	**1V**		**3V**	**3V**	**3V**		**5V**	**5V**	**5V**	

Audio:

Audio Layer 1		2A	2A	2A		4A	4A	4A		6A	6A	6A
Audio Layer 2	**1A**	**1A**		**3A**	**3A**	**3A**		**5A**	**5A**	**5A**		**A1**

Tables 11–12: Visual representation of the editing process of the audio and video pieces. It was randomly determined which of the 2 above configurations was used for the audio and video tracks (i.e., whether the audio or video track would begin with 1 or 2 pieces being presented).

***Nocturnal Synthesis:* Audio/Video Compositional Process Description**

Below is an outline of the process that underlies each audio and video piece. The process is the same for both audio and video, with only small differences in application between the two (these differences are also outlined below).

- Each piece is 6 minutes long.
- Each piece is made up of 25 pieces of materials.
- The 25 materials are all presented simultaneously in a layered/overlapping structure, with their placement slowly changing in a vertical(video)/horizontal(audio) rotation.
- For the video, the 25 materials are randomly ordered, with this sequence placed on the top layer above 24 other vertical layers. This sequence will equal 2 minutes in duration. For each lower layer, the same material is placed in the same order, but one step forward (e.g. if the material in the top layer begins with 1, 2, 3…25, then the next layer down begins with 25, 1, 2…24, etc.). A crossfade is added between every material so that they are constantly overlapping. At the 2-minute mark, when the materials have cycled through and are about to return to their original positions, the order is then reversed. At the 4-minute mark, this is again reversed to the original order for the final 2 minutes.
- For the audio, the 25 materials are randomly ordered, with this sequence being placed on the top layer above 24 other vertical layers. This sequence will equal 2 minutes in duration. For every lower layer, the

same material is placed but one step forward (e.g. if the top layer is 1, 2, 3…25, then the next layer down is 25, 1, 2…24, etc.). These layers each occupy a different placement across the stereo field, with the top layer being panned fully to the left and the bottom layer to the right, with each layer in between being equally spread out (this functionally means that every recording appears to be slowly moving from left to right). A crossfade is added between every material so that they are constantly overlapping. At the 2-minute mark, when the materials have cycled through and are about to return to their original positions (i.e., the materials appear to move from right to left). At the 4-minute mark, this is again reversed to the original order for the final 2 minutes.

***Nocturnal Synthesis:* Audio/Video Material Description**

Each of the audio and video pieces focuses on one different Material Type explored through one chosen Subject that is recorded according to five Guiding Principles (this applies to 5 of the 6 audio and video pieces, with the 6th piece having a different process which will be explained in the following process description). This process is outlined in more detail below:

- I first outlined five Material Types that could apply to both audio and visual material
  1. Empty
  2. Formless
  3. Defined
  4. Fragmented
  5. Structured

- I then decided on the audio and video Subjects through which I would explore these Material Types (see Table 13 for a visual overview of the Material Types, Audio Subjects and Video Subjects).

MATERIAL TYPES	AUDIO SUBJECT	VIDEO SUBJECT
EMPTY (as not having parts of content within it)	Sounds of interior spaces without sound-generating occupants. (i.e. **empty rooms**)	Images of things without any subjects. (i.e. **internally generated image**s)
FORMLESS (as being without clear boundries and identity)	Sounds of sonic distortion. (i.e. **different types of distorted bass/guiutar**)	Images of subjects where the line between subject and the surroundings are unclear. (i.e. **the sky/clouds**)
DEFINED (as having clear boundries and identity)	Sounds of things that start and stop. (i.e. **rhythms**)	Images of objects seperated from their surroundings. (i.e. **urban objects**)
FRAGMENTED (as a part seperated from its whole)	Sounds of things in the middle of their duration. (i.e. **drones**)	Images of details in nature. (i.e. **plants/trees**)
STRUCTURED (as multiple parts arranged to make a whole)	Sounds of synthesis (i.e. **analog synthesiser**)	Images of geometric forms. (i.e. **buildings**)

Tables 13: Table of the five Material Types and their corresponding Audio Subjects and Video Subjects.

- For the recording stage of each audio and video piece, there are 5 subcategories that each outline different 'Guiding Principles'.
- These guiding principles are simply suggestions for how to approach the material gathering (following on from *XENOBLAST,* where I first experimented with the idea of using the prompt of 'exploration' to guide the material gathering process).
- They are intentionally vague and subjective, as they are simply aimed at allowing me to experiment with different mindsets so I can engage with the subjects in various ways.

- The 5 Guiding Principles are as follows:
  1. Adaptive: take an approach where I change my actions based on the material.
  2. Restrained: take an approach where I am minimally involved and let the material be.
  3. Explorative: take an approach where I try to discover something new about the material.
  4. Receptive: take an approach where I seek to receive what the material wants to offer.
  5. Playful: take an approach where I treat the process as an act of play.
- 5 recordings were taken for each of these Guiding Principles, totalling 25 materials for each audio and video piece.
- Within each Guiding Principle sub-category are five different durations (given in seconds) to be assigned to the five materials: 2-3-5-6-8.[265]
- As outlined above, 5 of the 6 audio/video pieces consist of sets of 25 unique materials. For the 6th audio and 6th video pieces, 5 materials were randomly selected from each of the other pieces' material sets so that the 6th piece contained 25 materials displaying a mix of the various Audio/Video Subjects.
- To adhere to the requirements of this material-gathering process, I prepared a table for each audio and video piece (see Table 14 below for an example of one of these tables). 10 unique tables will be produced (5 audio, 5 video), with the material for the 6th audio and video piece being determined as outlined above.

Note: All randomisations described above (i.e., the ordering of materials within each piece, the assignment of durations to materials, the selection of materials for the 6th audio and video pieces, and the final ordering of the audio and video pieces) were determined by a Max/MSP patch, the text-based outputs of which I used as editing instructions (see Fig. 16 and Fig. 17 below).

[265] All durations in seconds are divisible by 120 (so that if looped multiple times it will eventually hit exactly 120 seconds) and all 25 durations add to 120 seconds/2 minutes. The duration of the sets of 5 materials in each sub-category will add up to 24 seconds (5 X 24 = 120), with the same 5 durations being the same across every sub-category set. Possible durations: 1-2-3-4-5-6-8-10-12 (120 is divisible by all). Chosen configuration: 2-3-5-6-8 (all add to 24, variety in lengths). This ensured that the editing process discussed above could be realised while maintaining a variety of durations amongst the recordings. Every piece of material was recorded to be triple the length of the longest possible duration (=24 seconds) to ensure that the crossfade edits were able to be applied under any ordering outcome, with the final shortened durations being randomly assigned at the editing stage.

MATERIAL NO.	GUIDING PRINCIPLE (5 sub-categories of 5 materials each)	DURATIONS (randomised per sub-category at the editing stage)
1	Approach 1: Adaptive	2
2	Approach 1: Adaptive	3
3	Approach 1: Adaptive	5
4	Approach 1: Adaptive	6
5	Approach 1: Adaptive	8
6	Approach 2: Restrained	3
7	Approach 2: Restrained	6
8	Approach 2: Restrained	8
9	Approach 2: Restrained	5
10	Approach 2: Restrained	2
11	Approach 3: Explorative	3
12	Approach 3: Explorative	8
13	Approach 3: Explorative	5
14	Approach 3: Explorative	2
15	Approach 3: Explorative	6
16	Approach 4: Receptive	6
17	Approach 4: Receptive	8
18	Approach 4: Receptive	2
19	Approach 4: Receptive	3
20	Approach 4: Receptive	5
21	Approach 5: Playful	5
22	Approach 5: Playful	3
23	Approach 5: Playful	6
24	Approach 5: Playful	8
25	Approach 5: Playful	2

Tables 14: Example of one of the tables made for each of the audio and video pieces.

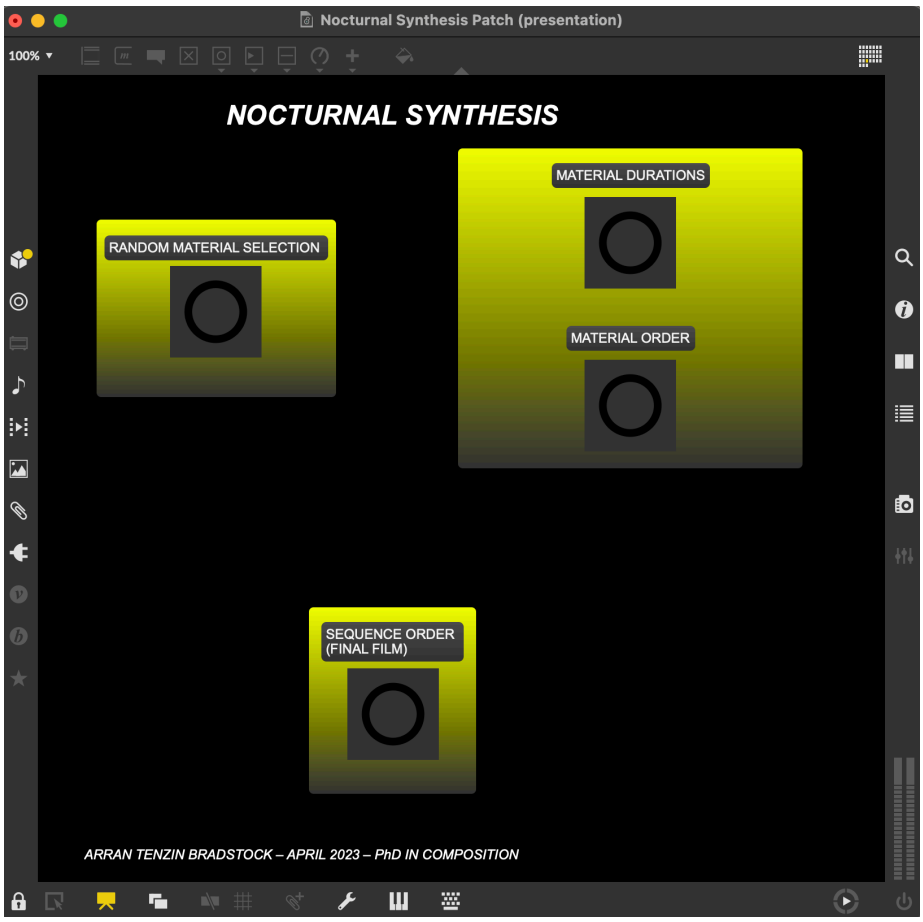


Fig. 16: Presentation mode of the Max/MSP patch.

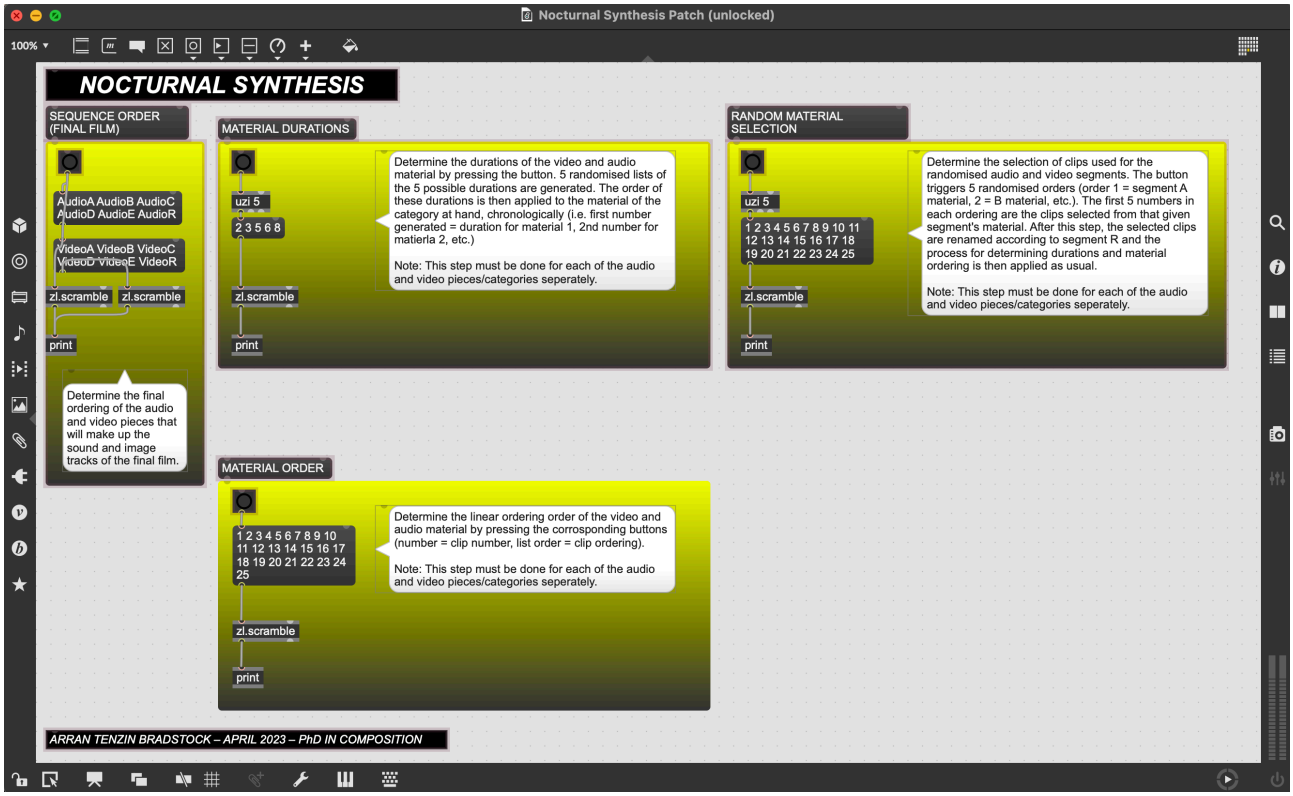


Fig. 17: Inner workings of the Max/MSP patch, with separate parts of the patch determining the various aspects of the process described above.

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